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William Holgate.



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OEDIPUS: 4

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is ACTED at His

Royal Highness

THE

DUKE's Theatre.

The A U T H O R S

Mr. D R Y D E N, and Mr. L E E.

*Hi proprium decus & partum indignantur honorem
Ni teneant.——Virgil.*

*Vos exemplaria Græca,
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna. Horat.*

LICENSED, Jan. 3. 167⁸.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

L O N D O N,

Printed for R. Bentley and M. Magnes in Russel-street
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OLIVER

THE

AND

ROYAL

DICTIONARY

OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

IN
ALL ITS VARIATIONS
AND
IMPROVEMENTS

FROM
THE
FRENCH

OF
THE
FRENCH

P R E F A C E.

THOUGH it be dangerous to raise too great an expectation, especially in works of this Nature, where we are to please an unsatiable Audience, yet 'tis reasonable to prepossess them in favour of an Author, and therefore both the Prologue and Epilogue inform'd you, that Oedipus was the most celebrated piece of all Antiquity. That Sophocles, not only the greatest Wit, but one of the greatest Men in Athens, made it for the Stage at the Publick Cost, and that it had the reputation of being his Master-piece, not only amongst the Seven of his which are still remaining, but of the greater Number which are perish'd. Aristotle has more than once admir'd it in his Book of Poetry, Horace has mention'd it : Lucullus, Julius Cæsar, and other noble Romans, have written on the same Subject, though their Poems are wholly lost ; but Seneca's is still preserv'd. In our own Age, Corneille has attempted it, and it appears by his Preface, with great success : But a judicious Reader will easily observe, how much the Copy is inferior to the Original. He tells you himself, that he owes a great part of his success to the happy Episode of Theseus and Dirce; which is the same thing, as if we should acknowledge, that we were indebted for our good fortune, to the under-plot of Adrastus, Eurydice, and Creon. The truth is, he

A 2 miserably

The Preface.

miserably fail'd in the Character of his Hero: if he desir'd that Oedipus should be pitied, he shou'd have made him a better man. He forgot that Sophocles had taken care to shew him in his first entrance, a just, a merciful, a successful, a Religious Prince, and in short, a Father of his Country: instead of these, he has drawn him suspicious, designing, more anxious of keeping the Theban Crown, than solicitous for the safety of his People: He tor'd by Theseus, contemn'd by Dirce, and scarce maintaining a second part in his own Tragedie. This was an error in the first concoction; and therefore never to be mended in the second or the third: He introduc'd a greater Heroe than Oedipus himself: for when Theseus was once there, that Companion of Hercules must yield to none: The Poet was oblig'd to furnish him with business, to make him an Equipage suitable to his dignity, and by following him too close, to lose his other King of Branford in the Crowd. Seneca on the other side, as if there were no such thing as Nature to be minded in a Play, is always running after pompous expression, pointed sentences, and Philosophical notions, more proper for the Study than the Stage: The French-man follow'd a wrong scent; and the Roman was absolutely at cold Hunting. All we cou'd gather out of Corneille, was, that an Episode must be, but not his way: and Seneca supply'd us with no new hint, but only a Relation which he makes of his Tiresias raising the Ghost of Lajus: which is here perform'd in view of the Audience, the Rites and Ceremonies so far his, as he agreed with Antiquity, and the Religion of the Greeks: but he himself was beholding to Homer's Tiresias in the Odyssees for some of them: and the rest have been collected from Heliodore's, Æthiopiques, and Lucan's Erietho. Sophocles indeed is
admirable

The Preface.

admirable every where : And therefore we have follow'd him as close as possibly we cou'd : But the Athenian Theater, (whether more perfect than ours is not now disputed) had a perfection differing from ours. You see there in every Act a single Scene, (or two at most) which manage the business of the Play, and after that succeeds the Chorus, which commonly takes up more time in Singing, than there has been employ'd in speaking. The Principal person appears almost constantly through the Play; but the inferiour parts seldome above once in the whole Tragedie. The conduct of our Stage is much more difficult, where we are oblig'd never to lose any considerable character which we have once presented. Custom likewise has obtain'd, that we must form an under-plot of second Persons, which must be depending on the first, and their by-walks must be like those in a Labyrinth, which all of 'em lead into the great Parterre: or like so many several lodging Chambers, which have their out-lets into the same Gallery. Perhaps after all, if we could think so, the ancient method, as 'tis the easiest, is also the most Natural, and the best. For variety, as 'tis manag'd, is too often subject to breed distraction: and while we would please too many ways, for want of art in the conduct, we please in none. But we have given you more already than was necessary for a Preface, and for ought we know, may gain no more by our instructions, than that Politick Naton is like to do, who have taught their Enemies to fight so long, that at last they are in a condition to invade them.

Dramatis

Dramatis Personæ.

Oedipus	Mr. <i>Betterton.</i>
Adrastus	Mr. <i>Smith.</i>
Creon	Mr. <i>Samford.</i>
Tiresias	Mr. <i>Harris.</i>
Hæmon	Mr. <i>Crosby.</i>
Alcander	Mr. <i>Williams.</i>
Diocles	Mr. <i>Norris.</i>
Pyracmon	Mr. <i>Roman.</i>
Phorbas	Mr. <i>Gillo.</i>
Dymas	
Ægeon	
<i>Ghost of Lajus</i>	Mr. <i>Williams.</i>

W O M E N.

Jocasta	<i>Mrs. Betterton.</i>
Eurydice	<i>Mrs. Lee.</i>
Manto.	<i>Mrs. Evans.</i>

Priests, Citizens, Attendants, &c.

SCENE, THEBES.

PROLOGUE.

WHEN Athens all the Græcian State did guide,
And Greece gave Laws to all the World beside,
Then Sophocles with Socrates did sit,
Supreme in Wisdom one, and one in Wit:
And Wit from Wisdom differ'd not in those,
But as 'twas Sung in Verse, or said in Prose.
Then, Oedipus, on Crowded Theaters,
Drew all admiring Eyes and listning Ears;
The pleas'd Spectator shouted every Line,
The noblest, manliest, and the best Design!
And every Critick of each learned Age
By this just Model has reform'd the Stage.
Now, should it fail, (as Heav'n avert our fear!)
Damn it in silence, lest the World should hear.
For were it known this Poem did not please,
You might set up for perfect Salvages:
Your Neighbours would not look on you as men:
But think the Nation all turn'd Picts agen.
Faith, as you manage matters, 'tis not fit
You should suspect your selves of too much Wit.
Drive not the yeast too far, but spare this piece;
And, for this once, be not more Wise than Greece.

See twice ! Do not pell-mell to Damning fall,
Like true born Brittains, whone're think at all :
Pray be advis'd ; and though at Mons you won,
On pointed Cannon do not always run.
With some respect to antient Wit proceed ;
You take the four first Councils for your Creed.
But, when you lay Tradition wholly by,
And on the private-Spirit alone relye,
You turn Fanaticks in your Poetry.
If, notwithstanding all that we can say,
You needs will have your pen' worths of the Play :
And come resolv'd to Damn, because you pay,
Record it, in memorial of the Fact,
The first Playbury'd since the Wollen Act.

OEDIPUS.

O E D I P U S.

ACT. I. SCENE *Thebes.*

The Curtain rises to a plaintive Tune, representing the present condition of Thebes ; Dead Bodies appear at a distance in the Streets ; Some faintly go over the Stage, others drop.

Enter Alcander, Diocles, Pyracmon.

Alc. **M**ethinks we stand on Ruines ; Nature shakes
About us ; and the Universal Frame
So loose, that it but wants another push
To leap from off its Hindges.

Dioc. No Sun to chear us ; but a Bloody Globe
That rowls above ; a bald and Beamless Fire ;
His Face o're-grown with Scurf: the Sun's sick too ;
Shortly he'll be an Earth.

Pyr. Therefore the Seasons
Lye all confus'd ; and, by the Heaven's neglected,
Forget themselves : Blind Winter meets the Summer
In his Mid-way, and, seeing not his Livery,
Has driv'n him headlong back : And the raw damps
With flaggy Wings fly heavily about,
Scattering their Pestilential Colds and Rheumes
Through all the lazy Air.

Alc. Hence Murrains follow'd
On bleating Flocks, and on the lowing Herds :
At last, the Malady
Grew more domestick, and the faithful Dog
Dy'd at his Masters Feet.

Dioc. And next his Master :
For all those Plagues which Earth and Air had brooded,
First on inferiour Creatures try'd their force ;
And last they seiz'd on man.

Pyr. And then a thousand deaths at once advanc'd,
And every Dart took place ; all was so sudden,
That scarce a first man fell ; one but began
To wonder, and straight fell a wonder too ;
A third, who stoop'd to raise his dying Friend,
Dropt in the pious Act. Heard you that groan ? *[Groan within.]*

Dioc. A Troop of Ghosts took flight together there :
Now Death's grown riotous, and will play no more
For single Stakes, but Families and Tribes :
How are we sure we breath not now our last,
And that next minute,
Our Bodies cast into some common Pit,
Shall not be built upon, and overlaid
By half a people.

Alc. There's a Chain of Causes
Link'd to Effects ; invincible Necessity
That what e're is, could not but so have been ;
That's my security.

To them, Enter Creon.

Creon. So had it need, when all our Streets lye cover'd
With dead and dying men ;
And Earth exposes Bodies on the Pavements
More than she hides in Graves !
Betwixt the Bride and Bridegroom have I seen
The Nuptial Torch do common offices
Of Marriage and of Death.

Dios. Now, *Oedipus*,
(If he return from War, our other plague)
Will scarce find half he left, to grace his Triumphs.

Pyr. A feeble *Pæan* will be sung before him.

Alc. He would do well to bring the Wives and Children
Of conquer'd *Argians*, to renew his *Thebes*.

Creon. May Funerals meet him at the City Gates
With their detested Omen.

Dioc. Of his Children.

Creon. Nay, though she be my Sister, of his Wife.

Alc. O that our *Thebes* might once again behold

A Monarch *Theban* born !

Dioc. We might have had one.

Pyr. Yes, had the people pleas'd.

Creon. Come, y'are my Friends :

The Queen my Sister, after *Lajus*'s death,
Fear'd to lye single ; and supply'd his place
With a young Successour.

Dioc. He much resembles
Her former Husband too ;

Alc. I always thought so.

Pyr. When twenty Winters more have grizzl'd his black Locks
He will be very *Lajus*.

Creon. So he will :

Mean time she stands provided of a *Lajus*
More young and vigorous too, by twenty Springs.
These Women are such cunning Purveyors !
Mark where their Appetites have once been pleas'd,
The same resemblance in a younger Lover
Lyes brooding in their Fancies the same Pleasures,
And urges their remembrance to desire.

Dioc. Had merit, not her dotage, been consider'd,
Then *Creon* had been King ; but *Oedipus*,
A stranger !

Creon. That word stranger, I confess
Sounds harshly in my Ears.

Dioc. We are your Creatures.

The people prone, as in all general ills,
To sudden change ; the King in Wars abroad,
The Queen a Woman weak and unregarded ;
Eurydice the Daughter of dead *Lajus*,
A Princess young and beautiful, and unmarried.
Methinks from these disjointed propositions
Something might be produc'd.

Creon. The Gods have done
Their part, by sending this commodious plague.
But oh the Princess ! her hard heart is shut
By Adamantine Locks against my Love.

Alc. Your claim to her is strong: you are betroth'd.

Pyr. True; in her Nonage.

Alc. But that let's remov'd.

Dioc. I heard the Prince of *Argos*, young *Adrastus*,
When he was hostage here.——

Creon. Oh name him not! the bane of all my hopes;
That hot-brain'd, head-long Warriour, has the Charms
Of youth, and somewhat of a lucky rashness,
To please a Woman yet more Fool than he.
That thoughtless Sex is caught by outward form
And empty noise, and loves it self in man.

Alc. But since the War broke out about our Frontiers,
He's now a Foe to *Thebes*.

Creon. But is not so to her; see, she appears;
Once more I'll prove my Fortune: you insinuate
Kind thoughts of me into the multitude;
Lay load upon the Court; gull 'em with freedom;
And you shall see 'em toss their Tails, and gad,
As if the Breeze had stung 'em.

Dioc. We'll about it. [Exeunt Alcander, Diocles, Pyracmon.]

Enter Euridice.

Creon. Hail, Royal Maid; thou bright *Eurydice*!
A lavish Planet reign'd when thou wert born;
And made thee of such kindred mold to Heaven,
Thou seem'st more Heaven's than ours.

Euryd. Cast round your Eyes;
Where late the Streets were so thick sown with men,
Like *Cadmus* Brood they jostled for the passage:
Now look for those erected heads, and see 'em
Like Pebbles paving all our publick ways:
When you have thought on this, then answer me,
If these be hours of Courtship.

Creon. Yes, they are;
For when the Gods destroy so fast, 'tis time
We should renew the Race.

Euryd. What, in the midst of horror!

Creon. Why not then?
There's the more need of comfort.

Euryd.

Euryd. Impious *Creon*!

Creon. Unjust *Eurydice*! can you accuse me
Of love, which is Heaven's precept, and not fear
That Vengeance, which you say pursues our Crimes,
Should reach your Perjuries?

Euryd. Still th' old Argument.

I bad you, cast your eyes on other men,
Now cast 'em on your self: think what you are.

Creon. A Man.

Euryd. A Man!

Creon. Why doubt you? I'm a man.

Euryd. 'Tis well you tell me so, I should mistake you
For any other part o'th' whole Creation,
Rather than think you man: hence from my sight,
Thou poyson to my eyes.

Creon. 'Twas you first poison'd mine; and yet methinks,
My face and person shou'd not make you sport.

Euryd. You force me, by your importunities,
To shew you what you are.

Creon. A Prince, who loves you:
And since your pride provokes me, worth your love,
Ev'n at its highest value.

Euryd. Love from thee!
Why love renounc'd thee e're thou saw'st the light:
Nature her self start back when thou wert born;
And cry'd, the work's not mine: —
The Midwife stood aghast; and when she saw
Thy Mountain back and thy distorted legs,
Thy face it self,
Half-minted with the Royal stamp of man;
And half o're come with beast, stood doubting long,
Whose right in thee were more:
And knew not, if to burn thee in the flames,
Were not the holier work.

Creon. Am I to blame if Nature threw my body
In so perverse a mould? yet when she cast
Her envious hand upon my supple joints,
Unable to resist, and rumbled 'em
On heaps in their dark lodging, to revenge
Her bungled work she stamp'd my mind more fair:

And as from Chios, huddled and deform'd,
 The God strook fire, and lighted up the Lamps
 That beautify the sky, so he inform'd
 This ill-shap'd body with a daring soul:
 And making less than man, he made me more.

Euryd. No; thou art all one errour; soul and body.
 The first young tryal of some unskill'd Pow'r;
 Rude in the making Art, and Ape of Jove.
 Thy crooked mind within hunch'd out thy back;
 And wander'd in thy limbs: to thy own kind
 Make love, if thou canst find it in the world:
 And seek not from our Sex to raise an off-spring,
 Which, mingled with the rest, would tempt the Gods
 To cut off humane Kind.

Creon. No; let 'em leave
 The *Argian* Prince for you: that Enemy
 Of *Thebes* has made you false, and break the Vows
 You made to me.

Euryd. They were my Mothers Vows,
 Made when I was at Nurse.

Creon. But hear me, Maid;
 This blot of Nature, this deform'd, loath'd *Creon*;
 Is Master of a Sword, to reach the blood
 Of your young *Minion*, spoil the Gods fine work,
 And stab you in his heart.

Euryd. This when thou dost,
 Then mayst thou still be curs'd with loving me:
 And, as thou art, be still unpitied, loath'd;
 And let his Ghost——No let his Ghost have rest;
 But let the greatest, fiercest, foulest Fury,
 Let *Creon* haunt himself.

[Exit Eurydice.]

Creon. Tis true, I am
 What she has told me, an offence to sight:
 My body opens inward to my soul,
 And lets in day to make my Vices seen
 By all discerning eyes, but the blind vulgar,
 I must make haste er'e *Oedipus* return,
 To snatch the Crown and her; for I still love;
 But love with malice; as an angry Cur
 Snarles while he feeds, so will I seize and stanch.

The hunger of my love on this proud beauty,
And leave the scraps for Slaves.

Enter Tiresias, leaning on a staff, and led by his Daughter Manto.

What makes this blind prophetick Fool abroad !
Wou'd his *Appollo* had him, he's too holy
For Earth and me ; I'll shun his walk ; and seek
My popular friends.

[*Exit Creon.*]

Tiresias. A little farther ; yet a little farther,
Thou wretched Daughter of a dark old man,
Conduct my weary steps : and thou who see'st
For me and for thy self, beware thou tread not
With impious steps upon dead corps ;—Now stay :
Methinks I draw more open, vital air,
Where are we ?

Manto. Under Covert of a wall :
The most frequented once, and noisy part
Of *Thebes*, now midnight silence reigns ev'n here ;
And grafs untrodden springs beneath our feet.

Tir. If there be nigh this place a Sunny banck,
There let me rest a while : a Sunny banck !
Alas ! how can it be, where no Sun shines !
But a dim winking Taper in the Skyes,
That nods, and scarce holds up his drowzy head
To glimmer through the damps.

[*A Noise within, follow, follow, follow, A Creon,
A Creon, A Creon.*]

Hark ! a tumultuous noise, and *Creon's* name
Thrice eccho'd.

Man. Fly, the tempest drives this way.

Tir. Whither can Age and blindness take their flight ?
If I could fly, what cou'd I suffer worse,
Secure of greater Ills !

[*Noise again, Creon, Creon, Creon.*]

Enter Creon, Diocles, Alcander, Pyracmon ; followed by the Crowd.

Creon. I thank ye, Countrymen ; but must refuse
The honours you intend me, they're too great ;
And I am too unworthy ; think agen,

And

And make a better choice.

1 *Cit.* Think twice ! I ne're thought twice in all my life !
That's double work.

2 *Cit.* My first word is always my second ; and therefore I'll have
No second word : and therefore once again I say, A *Creon*.

All. A *Creon*, A *Creon*, A *Creon*!

Creon. Yet hear me, Fellow Citizens.

Dioc. Fellow Citizens ! there was a word of kindness !

Alc. When did *Oedipus* salute you by that familiar name ?

1 *Cit.* Never, never ; he was too proud.

Creon. Indeed he could not, for he was a stranger.
But under him our *Thebes* is half destroyed.
Forbid it Heav'n the residue should perish
Under a *Theban* born.

'Tis true, the Gods might send this plague among you,
Because a stranger rul'd : but what of that,
Can I redress it now ?

3 *Cit.* Yes, you or none.

'Tis Certain that the Gods are angry with us
Because he reigns.

Creon. *Oedipus* may return : you may be ruin'd.

1 *Cit.* Nay, if that be the matter, we are ruin'd already.

2 *Cit.* Half of us that are here present, were living men but
Yesterday, and we that are absent do but drop and drop ;
And no man knows whether he be dead or living. And
Therefore while we are sound and well, let us satisfy our
Consciences, and make a new King.

3 *Cit.* Ha, if we were but worthy to see another Coronation,
And then if we must dye, we'll go merrily together.

All. To the question, to the question.

Dioc. Are you content, *Creon* should be your King ?

All. A *Creon*, A *Creon*, A *Creon*.

Tir. Hear me, ye *Thebans*, and thou *Creon*, hear me.

1 *Cit.* Who's that would be heard ; we'll hear no man.
We can scarce hear one another.

Tir. I charge you by the Gods to hear me.

2 *Cit.* Oh, 'tis *Apollo's* Priest, we must hear him ; 'tis the old blind
Prophet that sees all things.

3 *Cit.* He comes from the Gods too, and they are our betters ;
And therefore in good manners we must hear him : Speak, Prophet.

2 *Cit.* For coming from the Gods that's no great matter,
They can all say that ; but he's a great Scholar, he can make
Almanacks, and he were put to't, and therefore I say hear him.

Tir. When angry Heav'n scatters its plagues among you,
Is it for nought, ye *Thebans* ! are the Gods
Unjust in punishing ? are there no Crimes
Which pull this Vengeance down ?

1 *Cit.* Yes, yes, no doubt there are some Sins stirring
That are the cause of all.

3 *Cit.* Yes there are Sins ; or we should have no Taxes.

2 *Cit.* For my part I can speak it with a safe Conscience,
I ne're sinn'd in all my life.

1 *Cit.* Nor I.

3 *Cit.* Nor I.

2 *Cit.* Then we are all justified, the sin lyes not at our doors.

Tir. All justified alike, and yet all guilty ;
Were every mans false dealing brought to light,
His Envy, Malice, Lying, Perjuries,
His Weights and Measures, th'other mans Extortions,
With what Face could you tell offended Heav'n
You had not sinn'd ?

2 *Cit.* Nay, if these be sins, the case is alter'd, for my part I never
Thought any thing but Murder had been a sin.

Tir. And yet, as if all these were less than nothing,
You add Rebellion to 'em ; impious *Thebans* !
Have you not sworn before the Gods to serve
And to obey this *Oedipus*, your King
By publick voice elected ; answer me,
If this be true !

2 *Cit.* This is true ; but it's a hard World Neighbours,
If a mans Oath must be his master.

Creon. Speak *Diocles* ; all goes wrong.

Dioc. How are you Traytors Countrymen of *Thebes* ?
This holy Sir, who presses you with Oaths,
Forgets your first ; were you not sworn before
To *Lajus* and his Blood ?

All. We were ; we were.

Dioc. While *Lajus* has a lawful Successor,
Your first Oath still must bind : *Eurydice*
Is Heir to *Lajus* ; let her marry *Creon* :

Offended Heav'n will never be appeas'd
While *Oedipus* pollutes the Throne of *Lajus*;
A stranger to his Blood.

All. We'll no *Oedipus*, no *Oedipus*.

1 *Cit.* He puts the Prophet in a Mouse-hole.

2 *Cit.* I knew it wou'd be so, the last man ever speaks the best reason.

Tir. Can benefits thus dye, ungrateful *Thebans* !

Remember yet, when, after *Lajus's* death,
The Monster *Sphinx* laid your rich Country waste,
Your Vineyards spoil'd, your labouring Oxen slew ;
Your selves for fear mew'd up within your Walls.
She, taller than your Gates, o're-look'd your Town,
But when she rais'd her Bulk to sail above you,
She drove the Air arround her like a Whirlwind,
And shaded all beneath ; till stooping down,
She clap'd her leathern wing against your Tow'rs,
And thrust out her long neck, ev'n to your doors.

Dioc. Alk. Pyr. We'll hear no more.

Tir. You durst not meet in Temples

T'invoke the Gods for aid, the proudest he

Who leads you now, then cower'd, like a dar'd Lark:

This *Creon* shook for fear,

The blood of *Lajus*, cruddled in his Veins :

Till *Oedipus* arriv'd.

Call'd by his own high courage and the Gods,

Himself to you a God : ye offer'd him

Your Queen, and Crown ; (but what was then your Crown !)

And Heav'n authoriz'd it by his success :

Speak then, who is your lawful King ?

All. 'Tis *Oedipus*.

Tir. 'Tis *Oedipus* indeed : your King more lawful

Than yet you dream : for something still there lyes

In Heav'n's dark Volume, which I read through mists :

'Tis great, prodigious ; 'tis a dreadful birth,

Of wondrous Fate ; and now, just now disclosing.

I see, I see ! how terribly it dawns.

And my Soul sickens with it :

1 *Cit.* How the God shakes him !

Tir. He comes ! he comes ! Victory ! Conquest ! Triumph !

But oh ! Guiltless and Guilty : Murder ! Parricide !

Incest ; Discovery ! Punishment——'tis ended,
And all your sufferings o're.

A Trumpet within ; Enter Hæmon.

Ham. Rouze up ye *Thebans* ; tune your *Jo Pæans* !
Your King returns ; the *Argians* are o're-come ;
Their Warlike Prince in single Combat taken,
And led in Bands by God-like *Oedipus*.

All. *Oedipus, Oedipus, Oedipus !*

Creon. Furies confound his Fortune !—— [*aside.*
Haste, all haste ; [*To them.*

And meet with Blessings our Victorious King ;
Decree Processions ; bid new Holy-days ;
Crown all the Statues of our Gods with Garlands ;
And raise a Brazen Collumn, thus inscrib'd,
To *Oedipus*, now twice a Conquerour ; Deliverer of his *Thebes*.
Trust me, I weep for joy to see this day.

Tir. Yes, Heav'n knows why thou weep'st :—go, Countrymen,
And, as you use to supplicate your Gods——
So meet your King, with Bayes, and Olive-branches ;
Bow down, and touch his Knees, and beg from him
An end of all your Woes ; for only he
Can give it you. [*Ex. Tiresias, the People following.*

Enter Oedipus in triumph ; Adrastus Prisoner ; Dymas, Train.

Creon. All hail, great *Oedipus* ;
Thou mighty Conquerour, hail ; welcome to *Thebes* :
To thy own *Thebes* ; to all that's left of *Thebes* :
For half thy Citizens are swept away,
And wanting to thy Triumphs :
And we, the happy remnant, only live
To welcome thee, and dye.

Oedipus. Thus pleasure never comes sincere to man ;
But lent by Heav'n upon hard Usury :
And, while *Jove* holds us out the Bowl of Joy,
E're it can reach our Lips it's dash'd with Gall
By some left-handed God. O mournful Triumph !
O Conquest gain'd abroad and lost at home !

O *Argos* ! now rejoyce, for *Thebes* lyes low ;
 Thy slaughter'd Sons now smile and think they won ;
 When they can count more *Theban* Ghosts than theirs.

Adrast. No, *Argos* mourns with *Thebes* ; you temper'd so
 Your Courage while you fought, that Mercy seem'd
 The manlier Virtue, and much more prevail'd :
 While *Argos* is a People, think your *Thebes*
 Can never want for Subjects : Every Nation
 Will crow'd to serve where *Oedipus* commands.

Creon to *Hem.* How mean it shews to fawn upon the Victor !

Hem. Had you beheld him fight, you had said otherwise :
 Come, 'tis brave bearing in him, not to envy
 Superiour Vertue.

Oed. This indeed is Conquest,
 To gain a Friend like you : Why were we Foes ?

Adrast. 'Cause we were Kings, and each disdain'd an equal.
 I fought to have it in my pow'r to do
 What thou hast done ; and so to use my Conquest ;
 To shew thee, Honour was my only motive,
 Know this, that were my Army at thy Gates,
 And *Thebes* thus waste, I would not take the Gift,
 Which, like a Toy, dropt from the hands of Fortune,
 Lay for the next chance-comer.

Oed. embracing. No more Captive,
 But Brother of the War : 'Tis much more pleasant,
 And safer, trust me, thus to meet thy love,
 Than when hard Gantlets clench'd our Warlike Hands,
 And kept 'em from soft use.

Adr. My Conquerour.

Oed. My Friend ! that other name keeps Enmity alive.
 But longer to detain thee were a Crime,
 To love, and to *Eurydice*, go free :
 Such welcome as a ruin'd Town can give
 Expect from me ; the rest let her supply.

Adr. I go without a blush, though conquer'd twice,
 By you and by my Princess. [Ex. *Adrastus*.

Creon aside. Then I am conquer'd thrice ; by *Oedipus*,
 And her, and ev'n by him, the slave of both :
 Gods, I'm beholding to you, for making me your Image,
 VVou'd I cou'd make you mine. [Ex. *Creon*.
Enter

Enter the People with branches in their hands, holding them up, and kneeling : Two Priests before them.

Oedipus. Alas, my People !

What means this speechless sorrow, down cast eyes,
And lifted hands ! if there be one among you
Whom grief has left a tongue, speak for the rest.

I Pr. O Father of thy Country !

To thee these knees are bent, these eyes are lifted,
As to a visible Divinity.

A Prince on whom Heav'n safely might repose
The business of Mankind : for Providence
Might on thy careful bosom sleep secure,
And leave her task to thee.

But where's the Glory of thy former acts?
Ev'n that's destroy'd when none shall live to speak it.
Millions of Subjects shalt thou have ; but mute.
A people of the dead ; a crowded desert.
A Midnight silence at the noon of day.

Oed. O were our Gods as ready with their pity,
As I with mine, this Presence shou'd be throng'd
With all I left alive ; and my sad eyes
Not search in vain for friends, whose promis'd sight
Flatter'd my toys of war.

I Pr. Twice our deliverer.

Oed. Nor are now your vows
Address'd to one who sleeps :
When this unwelcome news first reach'd my ears,
Dymas was sent to *Delphos* to enquire
The cause and cure of this contagious ill :
And is this day return'd : but since his message
Concerns the publick, I refus'd to hear it
But in this general Presence : let him speak.

Dymas. A dreadful answer from the hallow'd *Urn*,
And sacred *tripous* did the Priestess give,
In these Mysterious words,

The Oracle. *Shed in a cursed hour, by cursed hand,*
Blood-Royal unrevenge'd, has curs'd the Land.
When Lajus death is expiated well

Your Plague shall cease: the rest let Lajus tell.

Oed. Dreadful indeed! blood, and a Kings blood too:
And such a Kings, and by his Subjects shed!
(Else why this curse on *Thebes*?) no wonder then
If Monsters, Wars, and plagues revenge such Crimes!
If Heav'n be just, it's whole Artillery,
All must be empty'd on us: Not one bolt
Shall erre from *Thebes*; but more, be call'd for more:
New moulded thunder of a larger size;
Driv'n by whole *Jove*. VVhat, touch annointed Pow'r!
Then Gods beware; *Jove* wou'd himself be next;
Cou'd you but reach him too.

2. *Pr.* We mourn the sad remembrance.

Oed. Well you may:
Worse than a plague infects you: y'are devoted
To Mother Earth, and to th' infernal Pow'rs:
Hell has a right in you: I thank you Gods,
That I'm no *Theban* born: how my blood cruddles!
As if this curse touch'd me! and touch'd me nearer
Than all this presence!—Yes, 'tis a Kings blood,
And I, a King, am ty'd in deeper bonds
To expiate this blood: but where, from whom,
Or how must I attone it? tell me, *Thebans*,
How *Lajus* fell? for a confus'd report
Pafs'd through my ears, when first I took the Crown:
But full of hurry, like a morning dream,
It vanish'd in the business of the day.

1 *Pr.* He went in private forth; but thinly follow'd;
And ne're return'd to *Thebes*.

Oed. Nor any from him? came there no attendant?
None to bring news?

2 *Pr.* But one; and he so wounded,
He scarce drew breath to speak some few faint words.

Oed. VVhat were they? something may be learnt from thence.

1 *Pr.* He said a band of Robbers watch'd their passage;
VVho took advantage of a narrow way
To murder *Lajus* and the rest: himself
Left too for dead.

Oed. Made you no more enquiry,
But took this bare relation?

2. *Pr.* 'Twas neglected :

For then the Monster *Sphinx* began to rage ;
And present cares soon buried the remote ;
So was it hush'd, and never since reviv'd.

Oed. Mark, *Thebans*, mark !

Just then, the *Sphinx* began to rage among you ;
The Gods took hold ev'n of th'offending minute,
And dated thence your woes : thence will I trace 'em.

1 *Pr.* 'Tis Just thou should'st.

Oed. Hear then this dreadful imprecation ; hear it :
'Tis lay'd on all ; not any one exempt :
Bear witness Heav'n, avenge it on the perjurd,
If any *Theban* born, if any stranger
Reveal this murder, or produce its Author,
Ten Attique Talents be his just reward :
But, if for fear, for favour, or for hire,
The murder'r he conceale, the curse of *Thebes*
Fall heavy on his head : Unite our plagues
Ye Gods, and place 'em there : from Fire and VVater,
Converse, and all things common be he banish'd.
But for the murderer's self, unfound by man,
Find him ye pow'rs Cœlestial and Infernal ;
And the same Fate or worse, than *Lajus* met,
Let be his lot : his children be accurst ;
His VVife and kindred, all of his be curs'd.

Both Pr. Confirm it Heav'n !

Enter Jocasta ; Attended by women.

Joc. At your Devotions ! Heav'n succeed your wishes ;
And bring th' effect of these your pious pray'rs
On you, and me, and all.

Pr. Avert this Omen, Heav'n !

Oed. O fatal sound, Unfortunate *Jocasta* !
VVhat hast thou said ! an ill hour hast thou chosen
For these fore-boding words ! why, we were cursing !

Joc. Then may that curse fall only where you laid it.

Oed. Speak no more !

For all thou say'st is ominous : we were cursing ;
And that dire imprecation hast thou fastn'd

On *Thebes*, and thee and me, and all of us.

Joc. Are then my blessings turn'd into a curse?

O Unkind *Oedipus*. My former Lord

Thought me his blessing : be thou like my *Lajus*.

Oed. what yet again ! the third time hast thou curs'd me ?

This imprecation was for *Lajus* death,

And thou hast wish'd me like him.

Joc. Horror seizes me !

Oed. why dost thou gaze upon me ? prithee love

Take off thy eye ; it burdens me too much.

Joc. The more I look, the more I find of *Lajus* :

His speech, his garb, his action ; nay his frown ;

(For I have seen it ;) but ne're bent on me.

Oed. Are we so like ?

Joc. In all things but his love.

Oed. I love thee more : so well I love, words cannot speak how well.

No pious Son er'e lov'd his Mother more

Than I my dear *Jocasta*.

Joc. I love you too

The self same way : and when you chid, me thought

A Mothers love start up in your defence,

And bade me not be angry : be not you :

For I love *Lajus* still as wives shou'd love :

But you more tenderly ; as part of me :

And when I have you in my arms, methinks

I lull my child asleep.

Oed. Then we are blest :

And all these curses sweep along the skyes

Like empty clouds ; but drop not on our heads.

Joc. I have not joy'd an hour since you departed,

For publick Miseries, and for private fears ;

But this blest meeting has or'e-pay'd 'em all.

Good fortune that comes seldom comes more welcome.

All I can wish for now, is your consent

To make my Brother happy.

Oed. How, *Jocasta* ?

Joc. By marriage with his Neece, *Eurydice* !

Oed. Uncle and Neece ! they are too near, my Love ;

'Tis too like Incest : 'tis offence to Kind :

Had I not promis'd, were there no *Adrastus* ;

No choice but *Creon* left her of Mankind,
They shou'd not marry; speak no more of it;
The thought disturbs me.

Joc. Heav'n can never bless
A Vow so broken, which I made to *Creon*;
Remember he's my Brother.

Oed. That's the Bar:
And she thy Daughter: Nature wou'd abhor
To be forc'd back again upon her self,
And like a whirl-pool swallow her own streams.

Joc. Be not displeas'd; I'll move the Suit no more.

Oed. No, do not; for, I know not why, it shakes me
When I but think on Incest; move we forward
To thank the Gods for my success, and pray
To wash the guilt of Royal Blood away.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

ACT. II. SCENE I.

An open Gallery. A Royal Bed-Chamber being suppos'd behind.

The Time, Night. Thunder, &c.

Hæmon, Alcander, Pyracmon.

Ham. SURE 'tis the end of all things! Fate has torn
The Lock of Time off, and his head is now
The gasty Ball of round Eternity!
Call you these Peals of Thunder, but the yawn
Of bellowing Clouds? By *Jove*, they seem to me
The World's last groans; and those vast sheets of Flame
Are its last Blaze! The Tapers of the Gods,
The Sun and Moon, run down like waxen-Globes;
The shooting Stars end all in purple Gellies,
And Chaos is at hand.

Pyr. 'Tis Midnight, yet there's not a *Theban* sleeps,
But such as ne're must wake. All crow'd about

D

The

The Palace, and implore, as from a God,
 Help of the King ; who, from the Battlement,
 By the red Lightning's glare, descry'd afar,
 Atones the angry Powers.

Thunder, &c.

Hem. Ha ! *Pyracmon*, look ;
 Behold, *Alcander*, from yon' West of Heav'n,
 The perfect Figures of a Man and Woman :
 A Scepter bright with Gems in each right hand,
 Their flowing Robes of dazling Purple made,
 Distinctly yonder in that point they stand,
 Just West ; a bloody red stains all the place :
 And see, their Faces are quite hid in Clouds.

Pyr. Clusters of Golden Stars hang o're their heads,
 And seem so crouded, that they burst upon 'em :
 All dart at once their baleful influence,
 In leaking Fire.

Alc. Long-bearded Comets stick,
 Like flaming Porcupines, to their left sides,
 As they would shoot their Quills into their hearts.

Hem. But see ! the King, and Queen, and all the Court !
 Did ever Day or Night shew ought like this ?

[Thunders again. The Scene draws, and discovers the Prodigies.]

Enter Oedipus, Jocasta, Euridice, Adrastus, all coming forward with amazement.

Oed. Answer, you Pow'rs Divine ; spare all this noise,
 This rack of Heav'n, and speak your fatal pleasure.

Why breaks yon dark and dusky Orb away ?

Why from the bleeding Womb of monstrous Night,

Burst forth such Miriads of abortive Stars ?

Ha ! my *Jocasta*, look ! the Silver Moon !

A settling Crimson stains her beauteous Face !

She's all o're Blood ! and look, behold again,

What mean the mistick Heavens, she journeys on ?

A vast Eclipse darkens the labouring Planet :

Sound there, sound all our Instruments of War ;

Clarions and Trumpets, Silver, Brass, and Iron,

And beat a thousand Drums to help her Labour.

Adr. 'Tis vain ; you see the Prodigies continue ;

Let's

Let's gaze no more, the Gods are humorous.

Oed. Forbear, rash man.——Once more I ask your pleasure !
 If that the glow-worm-light of Humane Reason
 Might dare to offer at Immortal knowledge,
 And cope with Gods, why all this storm of Nature ?
 Why do the Rocks split, and why rousls the Sea ?
 Why these Portents in Heav'n, and Plagues on Earth ?
 VVhy yon' Gygantick Forms, Ethereal Monsters ?
 Alas ! is all this but to fright the Dwarfs
 Which your own hands have made ? Then be it so.
 Or if the Fates resolve some Expiation
 For murder'd *Lajus* ; Hear me, hear me, Gods !
 Hear me thus prostrate : Spare this groaning Land,
 Save innocent *Thebes*, stop the Tyrant Death ;
 Do this, and lo I stand up an Oblation
 To meet your swiftest and severest anger,
 Shoot all at once, and strike me to the Center.

*The Cloud draws that veil'd the heads of the Figures in the Skie, and
 shews 'em Crown'd, with the names of Oedipus and Jocasta
 written above in great Characters of Gold.*

Adr. Either I dream, and all my cooler senses
 Are vanish'd with that Cloud that fleets away ;
 Or just above those two Majestick heads,
 I see, I read distinctly in large gold,
Oedipus and Jocasta.

Alc. I read the same.

Adr. 'Tis wonderful ; yet ought not man to wade
 Too far in the vast deep of Destiny.

[Thunder ; and the Prodigies vanish.]

Joc. My Lord, my *Oedipus*, why gaze you now,
 When the whole Heav'n is clear, as if the Gods
 Had some new Monsters made ? will you not turn,
 And bless your People ; who devour each word
 You breathe.

Oed. It shall be so.

Yes, I will dye, O *Thebes*, to save thee !
 Draw from my heart my blood, with more content
 Than e're I wore thy Crown. Yet, O, *Jocasta* !
 By all the indearments of miraculous love,
 By all our languishings, our fears in pleasure,

Which oft have made us wonder ; here I swear
 On thy fair hand, upon thy breast I swear,
 I cannot call to mind, from budding Childhood
 To blooming youth, a Crime by me committed,
 For which the awful Gods should doom my death.

Joc. 'Tis not you, my Lord,
 But he who murder'd *Lajus*, frees the Land :
 Were you, which is impossible, the man,
 Perhaps my Ponyard first should drink your blood ;
 But you are innocent, as your *Jocasta*,
 From Crimes like those. This made me violent
 To save your life, which you unjust would lose :
 Nor can you comprehend, with deepest thought,
 The horrid Agony you cast me in,
 When you resolv'd to dye.

Oed. Is't possible ?

Joc. Alas ! why start you so ? Her stiff'ning grief,
 Who saw her Children slaughter'd all at once,
 Was dull to mine : Methinks I should have made
 My bosom bare against the armed God,
 To save my *Oedipus* !

Oed. I pray, no more.

Joc. Yo've silenc'd me, my Lord.

Oed. Pardon me, dear *Jocasta* ;
 Pardon a heart that sinks with sufferings,
 And can but vent it self in sobs and murmurs :
 Yet to restore my peace, I'll find him out.
 Yes, yes, you Gods ! you shall have ample vengeance
 On *Lajus* murderer. O, the Traytor's name !
 I'll know't, I will ; Art shall be Conjur'd for it,
 And Nature all unravel'd.

Joc. Sacred Sir, —

Oed. Rage will have way, and 'tis but just ; I'll fetch him,
 Tho' lodg'd in Air, upon a Dragon's wing,
 Tho' Rocks should hide him : nay, he shall be dragg'd
 From Hell, if Charms can hurry him along :
 His Ghost shall be, by sage *Tiresias* pow'r,
 (*Tiresias*, that rules all beneath the Moon)
 Confin'd to flesh, to suffer death once more ;
 And then be plung'd in his first fires again.

Enter Creon.

Cre. My Lord,
Tiresias attends your pleasure.

Oed. Haste, and bring him in.
O, my *Jocasta*, *Euridice*, *Adrastus*,
Creon, and all ye *Thebans*, now the end
Of Plagues, of Madness, Murders, Prodigies,
Draws on: This Battel of the Heav'ns and Earth
Shall by his wisdom be reduc'd to peace.

Enter Tiresias, leaning on a staff, led by his Daughter Manto, followed by other Thebans.

O thou, whose most aspiring mind
Know'st all the business of the Courts above,
Open'st the Closets of the Gods, and dares
To mix with *Jove* himself and Fate at Council;
O Prophet, answer me, declare aloud
The Traytor who conspir'd the death of *Lajus*:
Or be they more, who from malignant Stars
Have drawn this Plague that blasts unhappy *Thebes*.

Tir. We must no more than Fate commissions us
To tell; yet something, and of moment, I'll unfold,
If that the God would wake; I feel him now,
Like a strong Spirit Charm'd into a Tree,
That leaps, and moves the Wood without a Wind:
The rous'd God, as all this while he lay
Intomb'd alive, starts and dilates himself;
He struggles, and he tears my aged Trunk
With holy Fury, my old Arteries burst,
My rivell'd skin,
Like Parchment, crackles at the hallow'd fire;
I shall be young again: *Manto*, my Daughter,
Thou hast a voice that might have sav'd the Bard
Of *Thrace*, and forc'd the raging Bacchanals,
With lifted Prongs, to listen to thy airs:
O Charm this God, this Fury in my bosom,
Lull him with tuneful notes, and artful strings;
With pow'rful strains; *Manto*, my lovely Child,
Sooth the unruly God-head to be mild.

SONG

SONG to Apollo.

Phœbus, God belov'd by men;
 At thy dawn, every Beast is rous'd in his Den;
 At thy setting, all the Birds of thy absence complain,
 And we dye, all dye till the morning comes again;

Phœbus, God belov'd by men!

Idol of the Eastern Kings,

Awful as the God who flings

His Thunder round, and the Lightning wings;

God of Songs, and Orphean strings,

who to this mortal bosom brings,

All harmonious heav'nly things!

Thy drouzie Prophet to revive,

Ten thousand thousand forms before him arise;

with Chariots and Horses all o' fire awake him,

Convulsions, and Furies, and Prophecies shake him:

Let him tell it in groans, tho' he bend with the load,

Tho' he burst with the weight of the terrible God.

Tir. The wretch, who shed the blood of old *Labdacides*,
 Lives, and is great;

But cruel greatness ne're was long:

The first of *Lajus* blood his life did seize,

And urg'd his Fate,

Which else had lasting been and strong.

The wretch, who *Lajus* kill'd, must bleed or fly;

Or *Thebes*, consum'd with Plagues, in ruins lye.

Oed. The first of *Lajus* blood! pronounce the person;

May the God roar from thy prophetick mouth,

That even the dead may start up, to behold:

Name him, I say, that most accursed wretch,

For by the Stars he dies:

Speak, I command thee;

By *Phœbus*, speak; for sudden death's his doom:

Here shall he fall, bleed on this very spot;

His name, I charge the once more, speak.

Tir. 'Tis lost,

Like what we think can never shun remembrance;

Yet of a sudden's gone beyond the Clouds.

Oed. Fetch it from thence; I'll have't, where e're it be.

Cre. Let me intreat you, sacred Sir, be calm,
And *Creon* shall point out the great Offendor.

'Tis true, respect of Nature might injoin

Me silence, at another time; but, oh,

Much more the pow'r of my eternal Love!

That, that should strike me dumb: yet *Thebes*; my Country—

I'll break through all, to succour thee, poor City!

O, I must speak.

Oed. Speak then, if ought thou know'st:

As much thou seem'st to know, delay no longer.

Cre. O Beauty! O illustrious Royal Maid!

To whom my Vows were ever paid till now,

And with such modest, chaste, and pure affection,

The coldest Nymph might read 'em without blushing;

Art thou the Murdrefs then of wretched *Lajus*?

And I, must I accuse thee! O my tears!

Why will you fall in so abhorr'd a Cause?

But that thy beauteous, barbarous, hand destroy'd

Thy Father (O monstrous act!) both Gods

And men at once take notice.

Oed. Euridice!

Eur. Traytor, go on; I scorn thy little malice,

And knowing more my perfect innocence,

Than Gods and men, then how much more than thee,

Who art their opposite, and form'd a Lyar;

I thus disdain thee! Thou once didst talk of Love;

Because I hate thy love,

Thou dost accuse me.

Adr. Villain, inglorious Villain,

And Traytor, double damn'd, who dur'st blaspheme

The spotless virtue of the brightest beauty;

Thou dy'st: nor shall the sacred Majesty, [Draws and wounds him]

That guards this place, preserve thee from my rage.

Oed. Disarm 'em both: Prince, I shall make you know

That I can tame you twice: Guards, seize him.

Adr. Sir,

I must acknowledge in another Cause

Repentance might abash me; but I glory
In this, and smile to see the Traytor's blood.

Oed. Creon, you shall be satisfy'd at full.

Cre. My hurt is nothing, Sir; but I appeal
To wise *Tiresias*, if my accusation
Be not most true. The first of *Lajus* blood
Gave him his death. Is there a Prince before her?
Then she is faultless, and I ask her pardon.
And may this blood ne're cease to drop, O *Thebes*,
If pity of thy sufferings did not move me
To shew the Cure which Heav'n it self prescrib'd.

Eur. Yes, *Thebans*, I will dye to save your lives,
More willingly than you can with my fate;
But let this good, this wise, this holy man,
Pronounce my Sentence: for to fall by him,
By the vile breath of that prodigious Villain,
Would sink my Soul, tho' I should dye a Martyr.

Adr. Unhand me, slaves: O mightiest of Kings,
See at your feet a Prince not us'd to kneel;
Touch not *Euridice*, by all the Gods,
As you would save your *Thebes*, but take my life:
For, should she perish, Heav'n would heap plagues on plagues,
Rain Sulphur down, hurl kindled bolts
Upon your guilty heads.

Cre. You turn to gallantry, what is but justice:
Proof will be easie made. *Adraustus* was
The Robber who bereft th' unhappy King
Of life; because he flatly had deny'd
To make so poor a Prince his Son-in-law:
Therefore 'twere fit that both should perish.

1 Theb. Both, let both dye.

All Theb. Both, both; let 'em dye.

Oed. Hence, you wild herd! For your Ring-leader here,
He shall be made Example. *Hemon*, take him.

1 Theb. Mercy, O mercy.

Oed. Mutiny in my presence!
Hence, let me see that busie face no more.

Tir. *Thebans*, what madness makes you drunk with rage?
Enough of guilty death's already acted:
Fierce *Creon* has accus'd *Euridice*,

With Prince *Adrastus* ; which the God reproves
By inward checks, and leaves their Fates in doubt.

Oed. Therefore instruct us what remains to do,
Or suffer ; for I feel a sleep like death
Upon me, and I sigh to be at rest.

Tir. Since that the pow'rs divine refuse to clear
The mystic deed, I'll to the Grove of Furies ;
There I can force th' Infernal Gods to shew
Their horrid Forms ;

Each trembling Ghost shall rise,
And leave their grisly King without a waiter.

For Prince *Adrastus* and *Euridice*,
My life's engag'd, I'll guard 'em in the Fane,
Till the dark mysteries of Hell are done.

Follow me, Princes ; *Thebans*, all to rest.

O, *Oedipus*, to morrow—but no more.

If that thy wakeful Genius will permit,

Indulge thy brain this night with softer slumbers :

To morrow, O to morrow !—sleep, my Son ;

And in prophetick dreams thy Fate be shown.

[*Ex. Tir. Adrast. Eurid. Manto, Thebans.*

Manent *Oed. Joc. Creon, Pyrac. Ham. Alcan.*

Oed. To bed, my Fair, my Dear, my best *Jocasta*.
After the toils of war, 'tis wondrous strange
Our loves should thus be dash'd. One moment's thought,
And I'll approach the arms of my belov'd.

Joc. Consume whole years in care, so now and then
I may have leave to feed my famish'd eyes
With one short passing glance, and sigh my vows :
This, and no more, my Lord, is all the passion
Of languishing *Jocasta*.

[*Exit.*

Oed. Thou softest, sweetest of the World ! good night.
Nay, she is beauteous too ; yet, mighty Love !
I never offer'd to obey thy Laws,

But an unusual chillness came upon me ;
An unknown hand still check'd my forward joy,
Dash'd me with blushes, tho' no light was near :
That ev'n the Act became a violation.

Pyr. He's strangely thoughtful.

Oed. Hark! who was that? Ha! *Creon*, did'st thou call me?

Cre. Not I, my gracious Lord; nor any here.

Oed. That's strange! methought I heard a doleful voice.

Cry'd Oedipus.—The Prophet bid me sleep;

He talk'd of Dreams, and Visions; and to morrow!

I'll muse no more on't, come what will or can,

My thoughts are clearer than unclouded Stars;

And with those thoughts I'll rest: *Creon*, good night!

[*Ex. with Hamon.*]

Cre. Sleep seal your eyes, Sir, Eternal sleep.

But if he must sleep and wake again, O all

Tormenting Dreams, wild horrors of the night,

And Hags of Fancy wing him through the air!

From precipices hurl him headlong down;

Charybdis roar, and death be set before him.

Alc. Your Curses have already ta'ne effect;

For he looks very sad.

Cre. May he be rooted, where he stands, for ever;

His eye-balls never move; brows be unbent;

His blood, his Entrails, Liver, heart and bowels,

Be blacker than the place I wish him, Hell.

Pyr. No more: you tear your self, but vex not him.

Methinks 'twere brave this night to force the Temple,

While blind *Tiresias* conjures up the Fiends,

And pass the time with nice *Eurydice*.

Alc. Try promises; and threats, and if all fail,

Since Hell's broke loose, why should not you be mad?

Ravish, and leave her dead, with her *Adrastus*.

Cre. Were the Globe mine, I'd give a Province hourly

For such another thought. Lust, and revenge!

To stab at once the only man I hate,

And to enjoy the woman whom I love!

Task no more of my auspicious Stars,

The rest as Fortune please; so but this night

She play me fair, why, let her turn for ever.

[*Enter Hamon.*]

Ham. My Lord, the troubled King is gone to rest;

Yet, e're he slept, commanded me to clear

The Antichambers: none must dare be near him

Cre.

Cre. Hamon, you do your duty;—
 And we obey.—The night grows yet more dreadful!
 'Tis just that all retire to their devotions;
 The Gods are angry: but to morrow's dawn,
 If Prophets do not lye, will make all clear. [*Thunder.*
[*As they go off,*

Oedipus Enters, walking asleep in his shirt, with a Dagger in his right hand, and a Taper in his left.

Oed. O, my *Jocasta*! 'tis for this the wet
 Starv'd Soldier lies all night on the cold ground;
 For this he bears the storms
 Of Winter Camps, and freezes in his Arms:
 To be thus circled, to be thus embrac'd;
 That I could hold thee ever!—Ha! where art thou?
 What means this melancholly light, that seems
 The gloom of glowing embers?
 The Curtain's drawn; and see, she's here again!
Jocasta? Ha! what, fall'n asleep so soon?
 How fares my love? this Taper will inform me.
 Ha! Lightning blast me, Thunder
 River me ever to *Prometheus* Rock,
 And Vultures gnaw out my Incestuous heart,
 By all the Gods! my Mother *Merope*!
 My Sword, a Dagger; Ha, who waits there? slaves,
 My Sword: what, *Hamon*, dar'st thou, Villain, stop me?
 With thy own Ponyard perish. Ha! who's this?
 Or is't a change of Death? By all my Honors,
 New murder; thou hast slain old *Polybus*:
 Incest and parricide, thy Father's murder'd!
 Out thou infernal flame: now all is dark,
 All blind and dismal, most triumphant mischief!
 And now while thus I stalk about the room,
 I challenge Fate to find another wretch
 Like *Oedipus*! [*Thunder, &c.*

Enter Jocasta attended, with Lights, in a Night-gown.

Oed. Night, Horrour, Death, Confusion, Hell, and Furies!
 Where am I? O, *Jocasta*, let me hold thee,

Thus to my bosom, ages, let me grasp thee:
 All that the hardest temper'd weather'd flesh,
 With fiercest humane Spirit inspir'd, can dare
 Or do, I dare, but, oh you Pow'rs, this was
 By infinite degrees too much for man.
 Methinks my deafn'd ears
 Are burst; my eyes, as if they had been knock'd
 By some tempestuous hand, shoot flashing fire:
 That sleep should do this!

Joc. Then my fears were true.
 Methought I heard your voice, and yet I doubted,
 Now roaring like the Ocean, when the winds
 Fight with the waves, now, in a still small tone
 Your dying accents fell, as racking ships,
 After the dreadful yell, sink murmuring down,
 And bubble up a noise.

Oed. Trust me, thou Fairest, best of all thy Kind,
 None e're in Dreams was tortur'd so before,
 Yet what most shocks the niceness of my temper,
 Ev'n far beyond the killing of my Father,
 And my own death, is, that this horrid sleep
 Dash'd my sick fancy with an act of Incest:
 I dreamt, *Jocasta*, that thou wert my Mother;
 Which, tho' impossible, so damps my Spirits,
 That I cou'd do a mischief on my self,
 Lest I should sleep and Dream the like again.

Joc. O, *Oedipus*, too well I understand you!
 I know the wrath of Heav'n, the care of *Thebes*,
 The cries of its Inhabitants, war's toils,
 And thousand other labours of the State,
 Are all referr'd to you, and ought to take you
 For ever from *Jocasta*.

Oed. Life of my life, and treasure of my Soul,
 Heav'n knows I love thee.

Joc. O, you think me vile,
 And of an inclination so ignoble,
 That I must hide me from your eyes for ever.
 Be witness, Gods, and strike *Jocasta* dead,
 If an immodest thought, or low desire
 Inflam'd my breast, since first our Loves were lighted.

Oed. O rise, and add not, by thy cruel kindness,
 A grief more sensible than all my torments.
 Thou think'st my dreams are forg'd; but by thy self,
 The greatest Oath, I swear, they are most true:
 But, be they what they will, I here dismiss 'em;
 Begon, *Chimeras*, to your Mother Clouds,
 Is there a fault in us? Have we not search'd
 The womb of Heav'n, examin'd all the Entrails
 Of Birds and Beasts, and tir'd the Prophets Art.
 Yet what avails? he, and the Gods together,
 Seem like Physicians at a loss to help us:
 Therefore, like wretches that have linger'd long,
 Wee'll snatch the strongest Cordial of our love;
 To bed, my Fair.

Ghost within. *Oedipus!*

Oed. Ha! who calls?

Did'st thou not hear a voice?

Joc. Alas! I did.

Ghost. *Jocasta!*

Joc. O my love, my Lord, support me!

Oed. Call louder, till you burst your airy Forms:
 Rest on my hand. Thus, arm'd with innocence,
 I'll face these babling *Demons* of the air.
 In spite of Ghosts, I'll on,
 Tho' round my Bed the Furies plant their Charms;
 I'll break 'em, with *Jocasta* in my arms:
 Clasp'd in the folds of love, I'll wait my doom;
 And act my joys, tho' Thunder shake the room.

[*Exeunt.*

A C T III. S C E N E I.

A dark Grove.

Enter Creon.

Cre. 'TIS better not to be, than to be unhappy.

Dio. What mean you by these words?

Cre. 'Tis better not to be, than to be *Creon*.

A thinking soul is punishment enough ;
 But when 'tis great, like mine, and wretched too,
 Then every thought draws blood.

Dio. You are not wretched.

Cre. I am : my soul's ill married to my body.
 I wou'd be young, be handsom, be belov'd :
 Cou'd I but but breath my self into *Adraſtus*——

Dio. You rave ; call home your thoughts.

Cre. I prithee let my soul take air awhile ;
 Were she in *Oedipus*, I were a King ;
 Then I had kill'd a Monster, gain'd a Battel,
 And had my Rival pris'ner ; brave, brave actions :
 Why have not I done these ?

Dio. Your fortune hinder'd.

Cre. There's it : I have a soul to do 'em all :
 But fortune will have nothing done that's great,
 But by young handsome fools : Body and brawn
 Do all her work : *Hercules* was a fool,
 And straight grew famous : a mad boistrous fool,
 Nay worse, a Womans fool.
 Fool is the stuff, of which Heav'n makes a Hero.

Dio. A Serpent ne're becomes a flying Dragon,
 Till he has eat a Serpent.

Cre. Goes it there !

I understand thee ; I must kill *Adraſtus*.

Dio. Or not enjoy your Mistress :

Eurydice and he are pris'ners here,
 But will not long be so : this tell-tale Ghost
 Perhaps will clear 'em both.

Cre. Well : 'tis resolv'd.

Dio. The Princess walks this way ;
 You must not meet her,
 Till this be done.

Cre. I must.

Dio. She hates your sight :
 And more since you accus'd her.

Cre. Urge it not.

I cannot stay to tell thee my design ;
 For she's too near.

Enter Eurydice.

How, Madam, were your thoughts employ'd !

Eur. On death, and thee.

Cre. Then were they not well sorted : life and me
Had been the better match.

Eur. No, I was thinking
On two the most detested things in Nature :
And they are death and thee,

Cre. The thought of death to one near death is dreadful :
O 'tis a fearful thing to be no more.

Or if to be, to wander after death ;
To walk as spirits do, in Brakes all day ;
And when the darkness comes, to glide in paths
That lead to Graves : and in the silent Vault,
Where lyes your own pale shroud, to hover o're it,
Striving to enter your forbidden Corps ;
And often, often, vainly breathe your Ghost
Into your lifeless lips :

Then, like a lone benighted Travellour
Shut out from lodging, shall your groans be answer'd
By whistling winds, whose every blast will shake
Your tender Form to Atoms.

Eur. Must I be this thin Being ? and thus wander !
No quiet after death !

Cre. None : you must leave
This beauteous body ; all this youth and freshnels
Must be no more the object of desire,
But a cold lump of Clay ;
Which then your discontented Ghost will leave,
And loath it's former lodging.
This is the best of what comes after death,
Ev'n to the best.

Eur. What then shall be thy lot !
Eternal torments, baths of boiling sulphur :
Vicissitudes of fires, and then of frosts ;
And an old Guardian Fiend, ugly as thou art,
To hollow in thy ears at every lash ;
This for *Eurydice* ; these for her *Adrastus*.

Cre.

Cre. For her *Adraſtus* !

Eur. Yes ; for her *Adraſtus* :

For death ſhall ne're divide us : death, what's death !

Dio. You ſeem'd to fear it.

Eur. But I more fear *Creon* :

To take that hunch-back'd Monſter in my arms.

Th' excreſcence of a man.

Dio. to Cre. See what you've gain'd.

Eur. Death only can be dreadful to the bad :

To innocence, 'tis like a bug-bear dreſs'd

To fright'n Children ; pull but off his Maſque

And he'll appear a friend.

Cre. You talk too ſlightly

Of death and hell. Let me inform you better.

Eur. You beſt can tell the news of your own Country.

Dio. Nay now you are too ſharp.

Eur. Can I be ſo to one who has accus'd me :

Of murder and of parricide ?

Cre. You provok'd me :

And yet I only did thus far accuſe you,

As next of blood to *Lajus* : be advis'd,

And you may live.

Eur. The means.

Cre. 'Tis offer'd you.

The Fool *Adraſtus* has accus'd himſelf.

Eur. He has indeed, to take the guilt from me.

Cre. He ſays he loves you ; if he does, 'tis well :

He ne're cou'd prove it in a better time.

Eur. Then death muſt be his recompence for love !

Cre. 'Tis a Fools juſt reward :

The wiſe can make a better uſe of life :

But 'tis the young mans pleaſure ; his ambition :

I grudge him not that favour.

Eur. When he's dead,

Where ſhall I find his equal !

Cre. Every-where.

Fine empty things, like him,

The Court ſwarms with 'em.

Fine fighting things ; in Camps they are ſo common,

Cro-ws feed on nothing elſe : plenty of Fools ;

A glut of 'em in *Thebes*.

And fortune still takes care they shou'd be seen :

She places 'em aloft, o'th' topmost Spoke

Of all her Wheel : Fools are the daily work

Of Nature ; her vocation : if she form

A man, she looses by't, 'tis too expensive ;

'Twou'd make ten Fools : A man's a Prodigy.

Eur. That is a *Creon* : O thou black detractor,
Who spitt'st thy venom against Gods and man !

Thou enemy of eyes :

Thou who lov'st nothing but what nothing loves,

And that's thy self : who hast conspir'd against

My life and fame, to make me loath'd by all ;

And only fit for thee.

But for *Adrastus* death, good Gods, his death !

What Curse shall I invent ?

Dio. No more : he's here.

Eur. He shall be ever here.

He who wou'd give his life ; give up his fame.——

Enter Adrastus.

If all the Excellence of woman-kind

Were mine ;——No, 'tis too little all for him :

Were I made up of endless, endless joyes.——

Adr. And so thou art :

The man who loves like me,

Wou'd think ev'n Infamy, the worst of ills,

Were cheaply purchast, were thy love the price :

Uncrown'd, a Captive, nothing left, but Honour ;

'Tis the last thing a Prince shou'd throw away ;

But when the storm grows loud, and threatens love,

Throw ev'n that over-board, for Love's the Jewel ;

And last it must be kept.

Cre. to Dio. Work him be sure

To rage, he's passionate ;

Make him th' Aggressor.

Dio. O false love ; false honour.

Cre. Dissembled both, and false !

Adr. Dar'st thou say this to me ?

F

Creon.

Cre. To you ; why what are you, that I should fear you?
 I am not *Lajus*: Hear me, Prince of *Argos*,
 You give what's nothing, when you give your honour;
 'Tis gone ; 'tis lost in battel. For your love,
 Vows made in wine are not so false as that:
 You kill'd her Father ; you confess'd you did:
 A mighty argument to prove your passion to the Daughter.

Adrast. aside. Gods, must I bear this brand; and not retort
 The lye to his foul throat!

Dio. Basely you kill'd him.

Adr. aside. O, I burn inward: my blood's all o'fire.

Alcides, when the poison'd shirt sat closest,
 Had but an Ague fit to this my Fever.

Yet, for *Eurydice*, ev'n this I'll suffer,
 To free my love. — Well then, I kill'd him basely.

Cre. Fairly, I'm sure, you cou'd not.

Dio. Nor alone.

Cre. You had your fellow-Thieves about you, Prince ;
 They conquer'd, and you kill'd.

Adr. aside. Down swelling heart !

'Tis for thy Princess all. — O my *Eurydice* ! — [To her.]

Euryd. to him. Reproach not thus the weakness of my Sex,
 As if I cou'd not bear a shameful death,
 Rather than see you burden'd with a Crime
 Of which I know you free.

Cre. You do ill, Madam,
 To let your head-long Love triumph o're Nature:
 Dare you defend your Fathers Murderer ?

Eur. You know he kill'd him not.

Cre. Let him say so.

Dio. See he stands mute.

Cre. O pow'r of Conscience, ev'n in wicked men !
 It works, it stings, it will not let him utter
 One syllable, one no to clear himself
 From the most base, detested, horrid act
 That e're cou'd stain a Villain, not a Prince.

Adr. Ha ! Villain.

Dio. Eccho to him Groves: cry Villain!

Adr. Let me consider ! did I murther *Lajus*;

Thus

Thus like a Villain?

Cre. Best revoke your words;
And say you kill'd him not.

Adr. Not like a Villain; prithee change me that
For any other Lye.

Dio. No, Villain, Villain.

Cre. You kill'd him not! proclaim your innocence;
Accuse the Princess: So I knew 'twould be.

Adr. I thank thee, thou instruct'st me:
No matter how I kill'd him.

Cre. aside. Cool'd again.

Eur. Thou, who usurp'st the sacred name of Conscience,
Did not thy own declare him innocent;
To me declare him so? The King shall know it.

Cre. You will not be believ'd, for I'll forswear it.

Eur. What's now thy Conscience?

Cre. 'Tis my Slave, my Drudge, my supple Glove,
My upper Garment, to put on, throw off,
As I think best: 'Tis my obedient conscience.

Adr. Infamous wretch!

Cre. My Conscience shall not do me the ill office
To save a Rivals life; when thou art dead,
(As dead thou shalt be, or be yet more base
Than thou think'st me,

By forfeiting her life, to save thy own. —)

Know this, and let it grate thy very Soul;
She shall be mine: (she is, if Vows were binding;)

Mark me, the fruit of all thy faith and passion,
Ev'n of thy foolish death, shall all be mine.

Adr. Thine, say'st thou, Monster;
Shall my love be thine?

O, I can bear no more!

Thy cunning Engines, have with labour rais'd

My heavy anger, like a mighty weight,

To fall and pash thee dead.

See here thy Nuptials; see, thou rash *Ixion*,

Thy promis'd *Juno* vanish'd in a Cloud;

And in her room avenging Thunder roars

To blast thee thus. — Come both, —

Cre. 'Tis what I wish'd!

[*Draws.*

[*Both Draw.*

Now see whose Arm can lanch the surer bolt,
And who's the better *Jove*. —

[*Fight.*

Eur. Help ; Murther, help !

Enter Hæmon and Guards, run betwixt them and beat down their Swords.

Hæm. hold ; hold your impious hands : I think the Furies,
To whom this Grove is hallow'd, have inspir'd you :
Now, by my soul, the holiest earth of *Thebes*
You have profan'd with war. Nor Tree, nor Plant
Grows here, but what is fed with Magick Juice,
All full of humane Souls ; that cleave their barks
To dance at Midnight by the Moons pale beams :
At least two hundred years these reverend Shades
Have known no blood, but of black Sheep and Oxen,
Shed by the Priests own hand to *Proserpine*.

Adr. Forgive a Strangers ignorance: I knew not
The honours of the place.

Hæm. Thou, *Creon*, didst.
Not *Oedipus*, were all his Foes here lodg'd,
Durst violate the Religion of these Groves,
To touch one single hair: but must, unarm'd,
Parle as in Truce, or furlily avoid
What most he long'd to kill.

Cre. I drew not first ;
But in my own defence.

Adr. I was provok'd,
Beyond Man's patience : all reproach cou'd urge
Was us'd to kindle one not apt to bear.

Hæm. 'Tis *Oedipus*, not I, must judge this Act :
Lord *Creon*, you and *Diocles* retire :
Tiresias, and the Brother-hood of Priests,
Approach the place : None at these Rites assist,
But you th' accus'd, who by the mouth of *Lajus*
Must be absolv'd or doom'd.

Adr. I bear my fortune.

Eur. And I provoke my tryal.

Hæm. 'Tis at hand.

For see the Prophet comes with Vervin crown'd,

The

The Priests with Yeugh, a venerable band;
We leave you to the Gods.

[*Ex. Hæmon with Creon and Diocles.*

*Enter Tiresias, led by Manto: The Priests follow; all cloathed
in long black Habits.*

Tir. Approach, ye Lovers;
I'll-fated Pair! whom, seeing not, I know:
This day your kindly Stars in Heav'n were join'd:
When lo, an envious Planet interpos'd,
And threaten'd both with death: I fear, I fear.

Eur. Is there no God so much a friend to love,
Who can controule the malice of our fate?
Are they all deaf? or have the Gyants Heav'n?

Tir. The Gods are just.—
But how can Finite measure Infinite?
Reason! alas, it does not know it self!
Yet Man, vain Man, wou'd with this short-lin'd Plummet,
Fathom the vast Abyſſe of Heav'nly justice.
What ever is, is in it's causes just;
Since all things are by Fate. But pur-blind Man
Sees but a part o'th' Chain; the nearest links;
His eyes not carrying to that equal Beam
That poizes all above.

Eur. Then we must dye!

Tir. The danger's imminent this day.

Adr. Why then there's one day less for humane ills:
And who wou'd moan himself, for suffering that,
Which in a day must pass? something, or nothing—
I shall be what I was again, before
I was *Adrastus*;—

Penurious Heav'n canst thou not add a night
To our one day; give me a night with her,
And I'll give all the rest.

Tir. She broke her vow
First made to *Creon*: but the time calls on:
And *Lajus* death must now be made more plain.
How loth I am to have recourse to Rites
So full of horreur, that I once rejoice

I want the use of Sight. —

1 Pr. The Ceremonies stay.

Tir. Chuse the darkeſt part o'th' Grove ;

Such as Ghoſts at noon-day love.

Dig a Trench, and dig it nigh

Where the bones of *Lajus* lye.

Altars rais'd of Turf or Stone,

Will th' Infernal Pow'rs have none.

Answer me, if this be done ?

All Pr. 'Tis done.

Tir. Is the Sacrifice made fit ?

Draw her backward to the pit :

Draw the barren Heyſer back ;

Barren let her be and black.

Cut the curled hair that grows

Full betwixt her horns and brows :

And turn your faces from the Sun :

Answer me, if this be done ?

All Pr. 'Tis done.

Tir. Pour in blood, and blood like wine,

To Mother Earth and *Proſerpine* :

Mingle Milk into the ſteam ;

Feaſt the Ghoſts that love the ſteam ;

Snatch a brand from funeral pile ;

Toſs it in to make 'em boil ;

And turn your faces from the Sun ;

Answer me, if all be done ?

All Pr. All is done.

[*Peal of Thunder ; and ſlaſhes of Lightning ;
then groaning below the Stage.*]

Manto. O, what Laments are thoſe ?

Tir. The groans of Ghoſts, that cleave the Earth with pain :
And heave it up : they pant and ſtick half way.

[*The Stage wholly darken'd.*]

Man. And now a ſudden darkneſs covers all,
True genuine Night : Night added to the Groves ;
The Fogs are blown full in the face of Heav'n.

Tir. Am I but half obey'd : Infernal Gods,
Muſt you have Muſick too ? then tune your voices,
And let 'em have ſuch ſounds as Hell ne're heard
Since *Orpheus* brib'd the Shades.

Muſick

Musick first. Then Sing.

*{ This to be set
through.*

1. *Hear, ye sullen Pow'rs below :
Hear, ye taskers of the dead.*
2. *You that boiling Cauldrons blow,
You that scum the molten Lead.*
3. *You that pinch with Red-hot Tongs ;*
1. *You that drive the trembling hosts
Of poor, poor Ghosts,
With your Sharpen'd Prongs ;*
2. *You that thrust 'em off the Brim.*
3. *You that plunge 'em when they Swim :*
1. *Till they drown ;
Till they go
On a row
Down, down, down
Ten thousand thousand, thousand fadoms low.*

Chorus. Till they drown, &c.

1. *Musick for a while
Shall your cares beguile :
Wondring how your pains were eas'd.*
2. *And disdaining to be pleas'd ;*
3. *Till Alecto free the dead
From their eternal bands ;
Till the snakes drop from her head,
And whip from out her hands.*
1. *Come away
Do not stay,
But obey
While we play,
For Hell's broke up, and Ghosts have holy-day.*

Chorus. Come away, &c.

*[A flash of Lightning : the Stage is
made bright, and the Ghosts are
seen passing betwixt the Trees.*

1 Lajus ! 2 Lajus ! 3 Lajus !

1 Hear ! 2 Hear ! 3 Hear !

Tir. Hear and appear :

By the Fates that spun thy thread ;

Cho. which are three,

Tir,

Tir. By the Furies fierce, and dread !

Cho. which are three,

Tir. By the Judges of the dead !

Cho. which are three,

Three times three !

Tir. By Hells blew flame :

By the Stygian Lake :

And by Demogorgon's name,

At which Ghosts quake,

Hear and appear.

[The Ghost of Lajus rises arm'd in his Chariot, as he was slain. And behind his Chariot, sit the three who were Murder'd with him.

Ghost of Lajus. Why hast thou drawn me from my pains below,
To suffer worse above : to see the day,
And *Thebes* more hated ? Hell is Heav'n to *Thebes*.
For pity send me back, where I may hide,
In willing night, this Ignominious head :
In Hell I shun the publick scorn, and then
They hunt me for their sport, and hoot me as I fly :
Behold ev'n now they grin at my gor'd side,
And chatter at my wounds.

Tir. I pity thee :

Tell but why *Thebes* is for thy death accurst,
And I'll unbind the Charm.

Ghost. O spare my shame.

Tir. Are these two innocent ?

Ghost. Of my death they are.

But he who holds my Crown, Oh, must I speak !
Was doom'd to do what Nature most abhors.
The Gods foresaw it ; and forbad his being,
Before he yet was born. I broke their laws,
And cloath'd with flesh his pre-existing soul,
Some kinder pow'r, too weak for destiny,
Took pity, and indu'd his new form'd Mass
With Temperance, Justice, Prudence, Fortitude,
And every Kingly vertue : but in vain.
For Fate, that sent him hood-winckt to the world,
Perform'd its work by his mistaking hands.
Asks thou who murder'd me ? 'twas *Oedipus* :
Who stains my Bed with Incest ? *Oedipus* :

For

For whom then are you curst, but *Oedipus* !
 He comes ; the Parricide : I cannot bear him :
 My wounds ake at him : Oh his murd'rous breath
 Venoms my aiery substance ! hence with him,
 Banish him ; sweep him out ; the Plague he bears
 Will blast your fields, and mark his way with ruine.
 From *Thebes*, my Throne, my Bed, let him be driv'n ;
 Do you forbid him Earth, and I'll forbid him Heavn.

[*Ghost descends.*]

Enter Oedipus, Creon, Hæmon, &c.

Oed. What's this ! methought some pestilential blast
 Strook me just entring ; and some unseen hand
 Struggled to push me backward ! tell me why
 My hair stands bristling up, why my flesh trembles !
 You stare at me ! then Hell has been among ye,
 And some lag Fiend yet lingers in the Grove.

Tir. What Omen saw'st thou entring ?

Oed. A young Stork,
 That bore his aged Parent on his back ;
 Till weary with the weight, he shook him off,
 And peck'd out both his eyes.

Adr. Oh, *Oedipus* !

Eur. Oh, wretched *Oedipus* !

Tir. O ! Fatal King !

Oed. What mean these Exclamations on my name ?
 I thank the Gods, no secret thoughts reproach me :
 No : I dare challenge Heav'n to turn me outward,
 And shake my Soul quite empty in your sight.
 Then wonder not that I can bear unmov'd
 These fix'd regards, and silent threats of eyes :
 A generous fierceness dwells with innocence ;
 And conscious vertue is allow'd some pride.

Tir. Thou know'st not what thou say'st.

Oed. What mutters he ! tell me, *Eurydice* :
 Thou shak'st : thy souls a Woman. Speak, *Adrastus* ;
 And boldly as thou met'st my Arms in fight ;
 Dar'st thou not speak, why then 'tis bad indeed :
Tiresias, thee I summon by thy Priesthood,

Tell me what news from Hell : where *Lajus* points,
And who's the guilty head !

Tir. Let me not answer.

Oed. Be dumb then, and betray thy native soil
To farther Plagues.

Tir. I dare not name him to thee.

Oed. Dar'st thou converse with Hell, and canst thou fear
An humane name !

Tir. Urge me no more to tell a thing, which known
Wou'd make thee more unhappy : 'twill be found
Tho' I am silent.

Oed. Old and obstinate ! Then thou thy self
Art Author or Accomplice of this murther,
And shun'st the Justice, which by publick ban
Thou hast incurr'd.

Tir. O, if the guilt were mine
It were not half so great : know wretched man,
Thou onely, thou art guilty ; thy own Curse
Falls heavy on thy self.

Oed. Speak this again :
But speak it to the Winds when they are loudest :
Or to the raging Seas, they'll hear as soon,
And sooner will believe.

Tir. Then hear me Heav'n,
For blushing thou hast seen it : hear me Earth,
Whose hollow womb cou'd not contain this murder,
But sent it back to light : and thou Hell, hear me,
Whose own black Seal has 'firm'd this horrid truth,
Oedipus murther'd *Lajus*.

Oed. Rot the tongue,
And blasted be the mouth that spoke that lye.
Thou blind of sight, but thou more blind of soul.

Tir. Thy Parents thought not so.

Oed. Who were my Parents ?

Tir. Thou shalt know too soon.

Oed. Why seek I truth from thee ?
The smiles of Courtiers, and the Harlots tears,
The Tradesmans oaths, and mourning of an Heir,
Are truths to what Priests tell.

O why has Priest-hood priviledge to lye,
And yet to be believ'd ! — thy age protects thee, —

Tir.

Tir. Thou canst not kill me ; 'tis not in thy Fate,
As 'twas to kill thy Father ; wed thy Mother ;
And beget Sons, thy Brothers.

Oed. Riddles, Riddles !

Tir. Thou art thy self a Riddle ; a perplex
Obscure *Enigma*, which when thou unty'st,
Thou shalt be found and lost.

Oed. Impossible !

Adrastus, speak, and as thou art a King,
Whose Royal word is sacred, clear my fame.

Adr. Wou'd I cou'd !

Oed. Ha, wilt thou not : can that Plebeian vice
Of lying mount to Kings ! can they be tainted !
Then truth is lost on earth.

Cre. The Cheats too gross :

Adrastus is his Oracle, and he,
The pious Juggler, but *Adrastus* Organ.

Oed. 'Tis plain, the Priest's suborn'd to free the Pris'ner.

Cre. And turn the guilt on you.

Oed. O, honest *Creon*, how hast thou been bely'd ?

Eur. Hear me.

Cre. She's brib'd to save her Lover's life.

Adr. If *Oedipus* thou think'st——

Cre. Hear him not speak.

Adr. Then hear these holy men.

Cre. Priests, Priests all brib'd, all Priests.

Oed. *Adrastus* I have found thee :

The malice of a vanquish'd man has seiz'd thee.

Adr. If Envy and not Truth——

Oed. I'll hear no more : away with him.

[*Hæmon takes him off by force: Creon and Eurydice follow.*

To Tir. Why stand'st thou here, Impostor !
So old, and yet so wicked.—lye for gain ;
And gain so short as age can promise thee !

Tir. So short a time as I have yet to live
Exceeds thy pointed hour ; Remember *Lajus* :
No more ; if e're we meet again, 'twill be
In Mutual darkness ; we shall feel before us
To reach each others hand ; Remember *Lajus*.

[*Ex. Tiresias: Priests follow.*

Oed.

Oedipus Solus.

Remember *Lajus* ! that's the burden still :
 Murther, and Incest ! but to hear 'em nam'd
 My Soul starts in me : the good Sentinel
 Stands to her Weapons ; takes the first Alarm
 To Guard me from such Crimes. — Did I kill *Lajus* ?
 Then I walk'd sleeping, in some frightful dream,
 My Soul then stole my Body out by night ;
 And brought me back to Bed e're Morning-wake.
 It cannot be ev'n this remotest way,
 But some dark hint would juggle forward now ;
 And goad my memory. — Oh my *Jocasta* !

*Enter Jocasta.**Joc.* Why are you thus disturb'd ?*Oed.* Why, would'st thou think it ?

No less than Murther ?

Joc. Murder ! what of Murder ?*Oed.* Is Murder then no more ? add Parricide,
 And Incest ; bear not these a frightful sound ?*Joc.* Alas !*Oed.* How poor a pity is AlasFor two such Crimes ! — was *Lajus* us'd to lye ?*Joc.* Oh no : the most sincere, plain, honest man. —
 One who abhorr'd a lye.*Oed.* Then he has got that Quality in Hell.

He charges me — but why accuse I him ?

I did not hear him speak it : they accuse me ;

The Priest, *Adrastus*, and *Eurydice*,Of Murdering *Lajus* --- Tell me, while I think on't,Has old *Tiresias* practis'd long this Trade ?*Joc.* What Trade ?*Oed.* Why, this foretelling Trade.*Joc.* For many years.*Oed.* Has he before this day accus'd me ?*Joc.* Never.*Oed.* Have you e're this inquir'd, who did this Murder ?*Joc.* Often ; but still in vain.*Oed.* I am satisfy'd,

Then

Then 'tis an infant-lye ; but one day old.
 The Oracle takes place before the Priest ;
 The blood of *Lajus* was to Murder *Lajus* :
 I'm not of *Lajus*'s blood.

Joc. Ev'n Oracles
 Are always doubtful, and are often forg'd :
Lajus had one, which never was fulfill'd,
 Nor ever can be now !

Oed. And what foretold it ?

Joc. That he shou'd have a Son by me, fore-doom'd
 The Murderer of his Father : true indeed,
 A Son was born ; but, to prevent that Crime,
 The wretched Infant of a guilty Fate,
 Bor'd through his untry'd feet, and bound with cords,
 On a bleak Mountain, naked was expos'd :
 The King himself liv'd many, many years,
 And found a different Fate ; by Robbers Murder'd,
 Where three ways meet : yet these are Oracles ;
 And this the Faith we owe 'em.

Oed. Sayst thou, Woman ?

By Heav'n thou hast awakn'd somewhat in me,
 That shakes my very Soul !

Joc. What, new disturbance !

Oed. Methought thou said'st, — (or do I dream thou said'st it !)
 This Murder was on *Lajus* person done,
 Where three ways meet ?

Joc. So common Fame reports.

Oed. Wou'd it had ly'd.

Joc. Why, good my Lord ?

Oed. No questions :

'Tis busie time with me ; dispatch mine first ;
 Say where, where was it done !

Joc. Mean you the Murder ?

Oed. Coud'st thou not answer without naming Murder ?

Joc. They say in *Phocide* ; on the Verge that parts it
 From *Daulia*, and from *Delphos*.

Oed. So ! — How long ! when happen'd this !

Joc. Some little time before you came to *Thebes*.

Oed. What will the Gods do with me !

Joc. What means that thought ?

Oed,

Oed. Something: but 'tis not yet your turn to ask:
How old was *Lajus*, what his shape, his stature,
His action, and his meen? quick, quick, your answer—

Joc. Big made he was, and tall: his port was fierce,
Erect his countenance: Manly Majesty
Sate in his front, and darted from his eyes,
Commanding all he viewed: his hair just grizled,
As in a green old age: bate but his years,
You are his picture.

Oed. aside. Pray Heav'n he drew me not? am I his picture?

Joc. So I have often told you.

Oed. True, you have;
Add that to the rest: how was the King
Attended when he travell'd?

Joc. By four Servants:
He went out privately.

Oed. Well counted still:
One scap'd I hear; what since became of him?

Joc. When he beheld you first, as King in *Thebes*,
He kneel'd, and trembling beg'd I wou'd dismiss him:
He had my leave; and now he lives retir'd.

Oed. This Man must be produc'd; he must, *Jocasta*.

Joc. He shall — yet have I leave to ask you why?

Oed. Yes, you shall know: for where should I repose
The anguish of my Soul, but in your breast!
I need not tell you *Corinth* claims my birth;
My Parents, *Polybus* and *Merope*,
Two Royal Names; their only Child am I.
It happen'd once; 'twas at a Bridal Feast,
One warm with Wine, told me I was a Foundling,
Not the Kings Son; I stung with this reproach,
Strook him: my Father, heard of it: the Man
Was made ask pardon; and the business hush'd.

Joc. 'Twas somewhat odd.

Oed. And strangely it perplext me.
I stole away to *Delphos*, and implor'd
The God, to tell my certain Parentage.
He bade me seek no farther: — 'twas my Fate
To kill my Father, and pollute his Bed,
By marrying her who bore me.

Joc. Vain, vain Oracles !

Oed. But yet they frighted me ;

I lookt on *Corinth* as a place accurst,
Resolv'd my destiny should wait in vain ;
And never catch me there.

Joc. Too nice a fear.

Oed. Suspend your thoughts ; and flatter not too soon.

Just in the place you nam'd, where three ways meet,
And near that time, five persons I encounter'd,
One was too like, (Heav'n grant it prove not him)
Whom you describe for *Lajus* : insolent
And fierce they were, as Men who liv'd on spoil.
I judg'd 'em Robbers, and by force repell'd
The force they us'd : In short, four men I slew :
The fifth upon his knees demanding Life,
My mercy gave it. ---bring me comfort now,
If I slew *Lajus*, what can be more wretched !
From *Thebes* and you my Curse has banish'd me :
From *Corinth* Fate.

Joc. Perplex not thus your mind ;
My Husband fell by Multitudes oppress'd,
So *Phorbas* said : this Band you chanc'd to meet ;
And murder'd not my *Lajus*, but reveng'd him.

Oed. There's all my hope : Let *Phorbas* tell me this,
And I shall live again ! ---

To you, good Gods, I make my last appeal ;
Or clear my Vertues or my Crime reveal :
If wandering in the maze of Fate I run,
And backward trod the paths I sought to shun,
Impute my Errours to your own Decree ;
My hands are guilty, but my heart is free.

[*Ex. Ambo.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Pyracmon, Creon.

Pyr. **S**OME business of import that Triumph wears
You seem to go with ; nor is it hard to guess

When

When you are pleas'd, by a malicious joy :
 Whose Red and Fiery Beams cast through your Visage
 A glowing pleasure. Sure you smile revenge,
 And I cou'd gladly hear

Cre. Would'st thou believe.

This giddy hair-brain'd King, whom old *Tiresias*
 Has Thunder-strook, with heavy accusation,
 Tho' conscious of no inward guilt, yet fears ;
 He fears *Jocasta*, fears himself, his shadow ;
 He fears the multitude ; and, which is worth
 An Age of laughter, out of all mankind,
 He chuses me to be his Orator :
 Swears that *Adrastus*, and the lean-look'd Prophet,
 Are joint-conspirators ; and wish me to
 Appease the raving *Thebans* ; which I swore
 To do.

Pyr. A dangerous undertaking ;
 Directly opposite to your own interest.

Cre. No, dull *Pyracmon* ; when I left his presence
 With all the Wings with which revenge could imp
 My flight, I gain'd the midst o'th' City ;
 There, standing on a Pile of dead and dying,
 I to the mad and sickly multitude,
 With interrupting sobs, cry'd out, O *Thebes*,
 O wretched *Thebes*, thy King, thy *Oedipus*,
 This barbarous stranger, this Usurper, Monster,
 Is by the Oracle, the wise *Tiresias*,
 Proclaim'd the murderer of thy Royal *Lajus* :
Jocasta too, no longer now my Sister,
 Is found complotter in the horrid deed.
 Here I renounce all tye of Blood and Nature,
 For thee, O *Thebes*, dear *Thebes*, poor bleeding *Thebes*.
 And there I wept, and then the Rabble howl'd,
 And roar'd, and with a thousand Antick mouths
 Gabbled revenge, Revenge was all the cry.

Pyr. This cannot fail : I see you on the Throne ;
 And *Oedipus* cast out.

Cre. Then strait came on
Alcander, with a wild and bellowing Croud,
 Whom he had wrought ; I whisper'd him to join,

And head the Forces while the heat was in 'em :
 So to the Palace I return'd, to meet
 The King, and greet him with another story.
 But see, he Enters.

Enter Oedipus, Jocasta, attended.

Oed. Said you that *Phorbas* is return'd, and yet
 Intreats he may return, without being ask'd
 Of ought concerning what we have discover'd ?

Joc. He started when I told him your intent,
 Replying, what he knew of that affair
 VVould give no satisfaction to the King ;
 Then, falling on his knees, begg'd, as for life,
 To be dismiss'd from Court : He trembled too,
 As if Convulsive death had seiz'd upon him,
 And stammer'd in his abrupt Pray'r so wildly,
 That had he been the murderer of *Lajus*,
 Guilt and distraction could not have shook him more.

Oed. By your description, sure as plagues and death
 Lay waste our *Thebes*, some deed that shuns the light
 Begot those fears : If thou respect'st my peace,
 Secure him, dear *Jocasta* ; for my Genius
 Shrinks at his name.

Joc. Rather let him go :
 So my poor boding heart would have it be,
 VVithout a reason.

Oed. Hark, the *Thebans* come !
 Therefore retire : and, once more, if thou lov'st me,
 Let *Phorbas* be retain'd.

Joc. You shall, while I
 Have life, be still obey'd :
 In vain you sooth me with your soft inearments,
 And set the fairest Countenance to view,
 Your gloomy eyes, my Lord, betray a deadness
 And inward languishing : that Oracle
 Eats like a subtil Worm it's venom'd way,
 Preys on your heart, and rots the noble Core,
 How-e're the beauteous out-side shews so lovely.

Oed. O, thou wilt kill me with thy Love's excess !

All, all is well; retire, the *Thebans* come.

[*Ex. Jocasta.*

Ghost. Oedipus!

Oed. Ha! again that scream of woe!

Thrice have I heard, thrice since the morning dawn'd

It hollow'd loud, as if my Guardian Spirit

Call'd from some vaulted Mansion, *Oedipus!*

Or is it but the work of melancholly?

When the Sun sets, shadows, that shew'd at Noon

But small, appear most long and terrible;

So when we think Fate hovers o're our heads,

Our apprehensions shoot beyond all bounds,

Owls, Ravens, Crickets seem the watch of death,

Nature's worst Vermine scare her God-like Sons.

Ecchoes, the very leavings of a Voice,

Grow babling Ghosts, and call us to our Graves:

Each Mole-hill thought swells to a huge *Olympus*,

While we fantastick dreamers heave and puff,

And sweat with an Imagination's weight;

As if, like *Atlas*, with these mortal Shoulders

We could sustain the burden of the World.

[*Creon comes forward.*

Cre. O, Sacred Sir, my Royal Lord —

Oed. What now?

Thou seem'st affrighted at some dreadful action,

Thy breath comes short, thy darted eyes are fixt

On me for aid, as if thou wert pursu'd:

I sent thee to the *Thebans*, speak thy wonder;

Fear not, this Palace is a Sanctuary,

The King himself's thy Guard.

Cre. For me, alas,

My life's not worth a thought, when weigh'd with yours;

But fly, my Lord, fly as your life is sacred,

Your Fate is precious to your faithful *Creon*,

Who therefore, on his knees, thus prostrate begs

You would remove from *Thebes* that Vows your ruine.

When I but offer'd at your innocence,

They gather'd Stones, and menac'd me with Death,

And drove me through the Streets, with imprecations

Against your sacred Person, and those Traytors

Which justify'd your Guilt: which curs'd *Tiresias*

Told,

Told, as from Heav'n, was cause of their destruction;

Oed. Rise, worthy *Creon*, haste and take our Guard,
Rank 'em in equal part upon the Square,
Then open every Gate of this our Palace,
And let the Torrent in. Hark, it comes,
I hear 'em roar: begon, and break down all
The dams that would oppose their furious passage.

[*Shout.*

[*Ex. Creon with Guards.*

Enter Adrastus, his Sword drawn.

Adr. Your City

Is all in Arms, all bent to your destruction:
I heard but now, where I was close confin'd,
A Thundring shout, which made my Jaylors vanish,
Cry, Fire the Palace; where's the cruel King?
Yet, by th' Infernal Gods, those awful Pow'rs
That have accus'd you, which these ears have heard,
And these eyes seen, I must believe you guiltless;
For, since I knew the Royal *Oedipus*,
I have observ'd in all his acts such truth
And God-like clearness; that to the last gush
Of blood and Spirits, I'll defend his life,
And here have Sworn to perish by his side.

Oed. Be witness, Gods, how near this touches me,

[*Embracing him.*

O what, what recompence can glory make?

Adr. Defend your innocence, speak like your self,
And awe the Rebels with your dauntless virtue.
But, hark! the Storm comes nearer.

Oed. Let it come.

The force of Majesty is never known
But in a general wrack: Then, then is seen
The difference 'twixt a Threshold and a Throne.

Enter Creon, Pyracmon, Alcander, Tiresias, Thebans.

Alc. Where, where's this cruel King? *Thebans*, behold
There stands your Plague, the ruine, desolation
Of this unhappy——speak; shall I kill him?

H 2

Or

Or shall he be cast out to Banishment ?

All Theb. To Banishment, away with him.

Oed. Hence, you Barbarians, to your slavish distance ;

Fix to the Earth your sordid looks ; for he

Who stirs, dares more then mad-men, Fiends, or Furies :

Who dares to face me, by the Gods, as well

May brave the Majesty of Thundring Jove.

Did I for this relieve you when besieg'd

By this fierce Prince, when coop'd within your Walls,

And to the very brink of Fate reduc'd ;

When lean-jaw'd Famine made more havock of you

Than does the Plague ? But I rejoyce I know you,

Know the base stuff that temper'd your vile Souls :

The Gods be prais'd, I needed not your Empire,

Born to a greater, nobler, of my own ;

Nor shall the Scepter of the Earth now win me

To rule such Brutes, so barbarous a People.

Adr. Methinks, my Lord, I see a sad repentance,

A general consternation spread among 'em.

Oed. My Reign is at an end ; yet e're I finish—

I'll do a justice that becomes a Monarch,

A Monarch, who, i'th' midst of Swords and Javelins,

Dares act as on his Throne encompass'd round

VVith Nation's for his Guard. *Alcander*, you

Are nobly born, therefore shall lose your head :

Here, *Hemon*, take him : but for this, and this,

Let Cords dispatch 'em. Hence, away with 'em.

[Seizes him.]

Tir. O sacred Prince, pardon distracted *Thebes*,

Pardon her, if she acts by Heav'n's award ;

If that th' Infernal Spirits have declar'd

The depth of Fate, and if our Oracles

May speak, O do not too severely deal,

But let thy wretched *Thebes* at least complain :

If thou art guilty, Heav'n will make it known ;

If innocent, then let *Tiresias* dye.

Oed. I take thee at thy word. Run, haste, and save *Alcander* :

I swear the Prophet, or the King shall dye.

Be witness, all you *Thebans*, of my Oath ;

And *Phorbus* be the Umpire.

Tir. I submit:

[Trumpets sound.]

Oed. What mean those Trumpets ?

Ham.

Hæm. From your Native Country,

Enter Hæmon with Alcander, &c.

Great Sir, the fam'd *Ægeon* is arriv'd,
That renown'd Favourite of the King your Father:
He comes as an Ambassador from *Corinth*,
And sues for Audience.

Oed. Haste, *Hæmon*, fly, and tell him that I burn
T' embrace him.

Hæm. The Queen, my Lord, at present holds him
In private Conference; but behold her here.

Enter Jocasta, Euridice, &c.

Joc. Hail, happy *Oedipus*, happiest of Kings?
Henceforth be blest, blest as thou canst desire,
Sleep without fears the blackest nights away;
Let Furies haunt thy Palace, thou shalt sleep
Secure, thy slumbers shall be soft and gentle
As Infants dreams.

Oed. What does the Soul of all my joys intend?
And whither would this rapture?

Joc. O, I could rave,
Pull down those lying Fanes, and burn that Vault,
From whence resounded those false Oracles,
That robb'd my Love of rest: if we must pray,
Rear in the streets bright Altars to the Gods,
Let Virgins hands adorn the Sacrifice;
And not a gray-beard forging Priest come near,
To pry into the bowels of the Victim,
And with his dotage mad the gaping World.
But see, the Oracle that I will trust,
True as the Gods, and affable as Men.

Enter Ægeon, Kneels.

Oed. O, to my arms, welcome, my dear *Ægeon*;
Ten thousand welcomes, O, my Foster-Father,
Welcome as mercy to a Man condemn'd!

Welcome to me,
 As, to a sinking Marriner,
 The lucky plank that bears him to the shore !
 But speak, O tell me what so mighty joy
 Is this thou bring'st, which so transports *Jocasta* ?

Joc. Peace, peace, *Ægeon* ; let *Jocasta* tell him !
 O that I could for ever Charm, as now,
 My dearest *Oedipus* : Thy Royal Father,
Polybus, King of *Corinth*, is no more.

Oed. Ha ! can it be ? *Ægeon*, answer me,
 And speak in short, what my *Jocasta*'s transport
 May over do.

Æge. Since in few words, my Royal Lord, you ask
 To know the truth ; King *Polybus* is dead.

Oed. O all you Pow'rs, is't possible ? what, dead !
 But that the Tempest of my joy may rise
 By just degrees, and hit at last the Stars :
 Say, how, how dy'd he ? Ha ! by Sword, by Fire,
 Or Water ? by Assassins, or Poyson ? speak :
 Or did he languish under some disease ?

Æge. Of no distemper, of no blast he dy'd,
 But fell like Autumn-Fruit that mellow'd long :
 Ev'n wonder'd at, because he dropt no sooner.
 Fate seem'd to wind him up for fourscore years ;
 Yet freshly ran he on
 Ten Winters more :

Till, like a Clock worn out with eating time,
 The Wheels of weary life at last stood still.

Oed. O, let me press thee in my youthful arms,
 And smother thy old age in my embraces.

Yes *Thebans*, yes *Jocasta*, yes *Adrastus*,
 Old *Polybus*, the King my Father's dead.
 Fires shall be kindled in the mid'st of *Thebes* ;
 I'th' midst of Tumults, Wars, and Pestilence,
 I will rejoice for *Polybus* his death.

Know, be it known to the limits of the World ;
 Yet farther, let it pass yon dazling roof,
 The mansion of the Gods, and strike 'em deaf
 With everlasting peals of Thundring joy.

Tir. Fate ! Nature ! Fortune ! what is all this world ?

Oed. Now, Dotard ; now, thou blind old wizard Prophet,
 VWhere are your boding Ghosts, your Altars now ;
 Your Birds of knowledge, that, in dusky Air,
 Chatter Futurity ; and where are now
 Your Oracles, that call'd me Parricide,
 Is he not dead ? deep laid in's Monument ?
 And was not I in *Thebes* when Fate attack'd him ?
 Avant, begon, you Vizors of the Gods !
 Were I as other Sons, now I should weep ;
 But, as I am, I've reason to rejoice :
 And will, tho' his cold shade should rise and blast me.
 O, for this death, let Waters break their bounds,
 Rocks, Valleys, Hills, with splitting Jo's ring :
Jo, Jocasta, Iophaan sing.

Tir. VWho would not now conclude a happy end ?
 But all Fate's turns are swift and unexpected.

Age. Your Royal Mother *Merope*, as if
 She had no Soul since you forsook the Land,
 VVaves all the neigh'ring Princes that adore her.

Oed. VVaves all the Princes ! poor heart ! for what ? O speak.

Age. She, tho' in full-blown flow'r of glorious beauty,
 Grow's cold, ev'n in the Summer of her Age :
 And, for your sake, has sworn to dye unmarried.

Oed. How ! for my sake, dye, and not marry ! O,
 My fit returns.

Age. This Diamond, with a thousand kisses blest,
 With thousand sighs and wishes for your safety,
 She charg'd me give you, with the general homage
 Of our *Corinthian* Lords.

Oed. There's Magick in it, take it from my sight ;
 There's not a beam it darts, but carries Hell,
 Hot flashing lust, and Necromantick Incest :
 Take it from these sick eyes, Oh hide it from me.
 No, my *Jocasta*, tho' *Thebes* cast me out,
 While *Merope*'s alive, I'll ne're return !
 O, rather let me walk round the wide World
 A beggar, than accept a Diadem
 On such abhorr'd conditions.

Joc. You make, my Lord, your own unhappiness,
 By these extravagant and needless fears.

Oed. Needleſs ! O, all you Gods ! By Heav'n I'd rather
Embrue my arms up to my very ſhoulders
In the dear entrails of the beſt of Fathers,
Than offer at the execrable act
Of damned Inceſt : therefore no more of her.

Æge. And why, O ſacred Sir, if Subjects may
Preſume to look into their Monarch's breaſt,
Why ſhould the chaſt and ſpotleſs *Merope*
Infuſe ſuch thoughts as I muſt bluſh to name ?

Oed. Becauſe the God of *Delphos* did forewarn me,
With Thundring Oracles.

Æge. May I intreat to know 'em ?

Oed. Yes, my *Ægeon* ; but the ſad remembrance
Quite blaſts my Soul : ſee then the ſwelling Priest !
Methinks I have his Image now in view ;
He mounts the *Tripes* in a minutes ſpace,
His clouded head knocks at the Temple roof,
While from his mouth
Theſe diſmal words are heard :

“ Fly, wretch, whom Fate has doom'd thy Fathers blood to ſpill,
“ And with prepoſt'rous Births, thy Mothers womb to fill.

Æge. Is this the Cauſe
Why you reſuſe the Diadem of *Corinth*.

Oed. The Cauſe ! why, is it not a monſtrous one ?

Æge. Great Sir, you may return ; and tho' you ſhould
Enjoy the Queen (which all the Gods forbid)
The Act would prove no inceſt.

Oed. How, *Ægeon* ?
Tho' I enjoy'd my Mother, not inceſtuouſ !
Thou rav'ſt, and ſo do I ; and theſe all catch
My madneſs ; look, they're dead with deep diſtraction :
Not Inceſt ! what, not Inceſt with my Mother ?

Æge. My Lord, Queen *Merope* is not your Mother.

Oed. Ha ! did I hear thee right ? not *Merope*
My Mother !

Æge. Nor was *Polybus* your Father.

Oed. Then all my days and nights muſt now be ſpent
In curious ſearch, to find out thoſe dark Parents
Who gave me to the World ; ſpeak then *Ægeon*,
By all the God's Celeſtial and Infernal,

By all the ties of Nature, blood, and friendship,
 Conceal not from this rack'd despairing King
 A point or smallest grain of what thou know'st :
 Speak then, O answer to my doubts directly.
 If Royal *Polybus* was not my Father,
 Why was I call'd his Son ?

Æge. He, from my Arms,
 Receiv'd you as the fairest Gift of Nature.
 Not but you were adorn'd with all the Riches
 That Empire could bestow in costly Mantles
 Upon it's Infant Heir.

Oed. But was I made the Heir of *Corinth's* Crown,
 Because *Ægeon's* hands presented me ?

Æge. By my advice,
 Being past all hope of Children,
 He took, embrac'd, and own'd you for his Son.

Oed. Perhaps I then am your's ; instruct me, Sir :
 If it be so, I'll kneel and weep before you,
 With all th' obedience of a penitent Child,
 Imploring pardon.
 Kill me if you please,
 I will not writhe my Body at the wound :
 But sink upon your feet with a last sigh,
 And ask forgiveness with my dying hands.

Æge. O rise, and call not to this aged Cheek
 The little blood which should keep warm my heart ;
 You are not mine, nor ought I to be blest
 With such a God-like off-spring. Sir, I found you
 Upon the Mount *Citharon*.

Oed. O speak, go on, the Air grows sensible
 Of the great things you utter, and is calm :
 The hurry'd Orbs, with Storms so Rack'd of late,
 Seem to stand still, as if that *Jove* were talking.
Citharon ! speak, the Vally of *Citharon* !

Æge. Oft-times before I thither did resort,
 Charm'd with the conversation of a man
 Who led a Rural life, and had command
 O're all the Shepherds who about those Vales
 Tended their numerous Flocks : in this man's Arms
 I saw you smiling at a fatal Dagger

Whose point he often offer'd at your throat ;
 But then you smil'd, and then he drew it back ;
 Then lifted it again, you smil'd again :
 Till he at last in fury threw it from him,
 And cry'd aloud, the Gods forbid thy death.
 Then I rush'd in, and, after some discourse,
 To me he did bequeath your innocent life ;
 And I, the welcome care to *Polybus*.

Oed. To whom belongs the Master of the Shepherds ?

Æge. His name I knew not, or I have forgot,
 That he was of the Family of *Lajus*,
 I well remember.

Oed. And is your Friend alive ? for if he be
 I'll buy his presence, tho' it cost my Crown.

Æge. Your menial Attendants best can tell
 Whether he lives, or not ; and who has now
 His place.

Joc. Winds, bear me to some barren Island,
 Where print of humane Feet was never seen,
 O're-grown with Weeds of such a monstrous height,
 Their baleful tops are wash'd with bellying Clouds :
 Beneath whose venomous shade I may have vent
 For horrors that would blast the Barbarous World.

Oed. If there be any here that knows the person
 Whom he describ'd, I charge him on his life
 To speak ; concealment shall be sudden death :
 But he who brings him forth, shall have reward
 Beyond Ambition's lust.

Tir. His name is *Phorbas* :

Jocasta knows him well ; but if I may
 Advise, Rest where you are, and seek no farther.

Oed. Then all goes well, Since *Phorbas* is secur'd
 By my *Jocasta*. Haste, and bring him forth :
 My Love, my Queen, give Orders. Ha ! what means
 These Tears and Groans, and Struglings ? speak, my Fair,
 What are thy troubles ?

Joc. Yours ; and yours are mine :
 Let me Conjure you take the Prophets Counsel,
 And let this *Phorbas* go.

Oed. Not for the World.

By all the Gods, I'll know my birth, tho' death
Attends the search : I have already past
The middle of the Stream ; and to return
Seems greater labour, than to venture o're.
Therefore produce him.

Joc. Once more, by the Gods,
I beg, my *Oedipus*, my Lord, my Life,
My love, my all, my only utmost hope,
I beg you banish *Phorbas*: O, the Gods,
I kneel, that you may grant this first request.
Deny me all things else ; but, for my sake,
And as you prize your own eternal quiet,
Never let *Phorbas* come into your presence.

Oed. You must be rais'd, and *Phorbas* shall appear,
Tho' his dread eyes were *Basilisks*. Guards, haste,
Search the Queens Lodgings ; find, and force him thither.

[*Exeunt Guards.*]

Joc. O, *Oedipus*, yet send,
And stop their entrance, e're it be too late :
Unless you wish to see *Jocasta* rent
With Furies, slain out-right with meer distraction,
Keep from your eyes and mine the dreadful *Phorbas*.
Forbear this search, I'll think you more than mortal :
Will you yet hear me ?

Oed. Tempests will be heard,
And Waves will dash, tho Rocks their basis keep,——
But see, they Enter. If thou truly lov'st me,
Either forbear this Subject, or retire.

Enter Hæmon, Guards, with Phorbas.

Joc. Prepare then, wretched Prince, prepare to hear
A story, that shall turn thee into Stone,
Could there be hew'n a monstrous Gap in Nature,
A flaw made through the Center, by some God,
Through which the groans of Ghosts might strike thy ears,
They would not wound thee, as this Story will.
Hark, hark ! a hollow Voice calls out aloud,
Jocasta : yes, I'll to the Royal Bed,
Where first the Mysteries of our loves were acted,

And double dye it with imperial Crimson ;
 Tear off this curling hair,
 Be gorg'd with Fire, stab every vital part,
 And, when at last I'm slain, to Crown the horror,
 My poor tormented Ghost shall cleave the ground,
 To try if Hell can yet more deeply wound.

[Ex.

Oed. She's gon ; and as she went, methought her eyes
 Grew larger, while a thousand frantick Spirits
 Seething, like rising bubbles, on the brim,
 Peep'd from the Watry brink, and glow'd upon me.
 I'll seek no more ; but hush my Genius up
 That throws me on my Fate. — Impossible !
 O wretched Man, whose too too busie thoughts
 Ride swifter than the galloping Heav'ns round,
 With an eternal hurry of the Soul :
 Nay, there's a time when ev'n the rowling year
 Seems to stand still, dead calms are in the Ocean,
 When not a breath disturbs the drowzy Waves :
 But Man, the very Monster of the World,
 Is ne're at rest, the Soul for ever wakes.
 Come then, since Destiny thus drives us on,
 Let's know the bottom. *Hemon*, you I sent :
 Where is that *Phorbas*.

Hem. Here, my Royal Lord.

Oed. Speak first, *Ægeon*, say, is this the Man ?

Æge. My Lord, it is : Tho' time has plough'd that face
 With many furrows since I saw it first ;
 Yet I'm too well acquainted with the ground, quite to forget it.

Oed. Peace ; stand back a while.

Come hither Friend ; I hear thy name is *Phorbas*.
 Why dost thou turn thy face ? I charge thee answer
 To what I shall enquire: Wert thou not once
 The Servant of King *Lajus* here in *Thebes* ?

Phor. I was, great Sir, his true and faithful Servant ;
 Born and bred up in Court, no forreign Slave.

Oed. What Office hadst thou ? what was thy Employment ?

Phor. He made me Lord of all his Rural Pleasures ;
 For much he lov'd 'em: oft I entertain'd
 With sporting *Swains*, o're whom I had command.

Oed. Where was thy Residence ? to what part o'th' Country

Didst

Didst thou most frequently resort ?

Phor. To Mount *Citharon*, and the pleasant Vallies
Which all about lye shadowing it's large feet.

Oed. Come forth *Ægeon*. Ha ! why starts thou, *Phorbas* ?
Forward, I say, and Face to Face confront him ;
Look wistly on him, through him if thou canst,
And tell me on thy life, say, dost thou know him ?
Didst thou e're see him ? converse with him
Near Mount *Citharon* ?

Phor. Who, my Lord, this man ?

Oed. This Man, this old, this venerable Man :
Speak, didst thou ever meet him there ?

Phor. Where, sacred Sir.

Oed. Near Mount *Citharon* ; answer to the purpose :
'Tis a King speaks ; and Royal minutes are
Of much more worth than thousand Vulgar years :
Didst thou e're see this Man near Mount *Citharon*.

Phor. Most sure, my Lord, I have seen lines like those
His Visage bears ; but know not where nor when.

Æge. Is't possible you should forget your ancient Friend ?
There are perhaps

Particulars, which may excite your dead remembrance.

Have you forgot I took an Infant from you,
Doom'd to be murder'd in that gloomy Vale ?
The Swadling-bands were purple, wrought with Gold,
Have you forgot too how you wept and begg'd
That I should breed him up, and ask no more.

Phor. What-e're I begg'd ; thou like a Dotard, speak'st
More than is requisite : and what of this ?
Why is it mention'd now ? and why, O why
Dost thou betray the secrets of thy Friend ?

Æge. Be not too rash. That Infant grew at last
A King : and here the happy Monarch stands.

Phor. Ha ! whither wouldst thou ? O what hast thou utter'd !
For what thou hast said, Death strike thee dumb for ever.

Oed. Forbear to Curse the innocent ; and be
Accurst thyself, thou shifting Traytor, Villain,
Damn'd Hypocrite, equivocating Slave.

Phor. O Heav'ns ! wherein, my Lord, have I offended ?

Oed. Why speak you not according to my charge ?

Bring forth the Rack : since mildness cannot win you,
Torments shall force.

Phor. Hold, hold, O dreadful Sir ;
You will not Rack an innocent old man.

Oed. Speak then.

Phor. Alas, what would you have me say ?

Oed. Did this old man take from your Arms an Infant ?

Phor. He did: And, Oh ! I wish to all the Gods,
Phorbas had perish'd in that very moment.

Oed. Moment ! Thou shalt be hours, days, years a dying.
Here, bind his hands ; he dallies with my fury :
But I shall find a way——

Phor. My Lord, I said
I gave the Infant to him.

Oed. Was he thy own, or given thee by another ?

Phor. He was not mine ; but given me by another.

Oed. Whence ? and from whom ? what City ? of what House ?

Phor. O, Royal Sir, I bow me to the ground,
Would I could sink beneath it : by the Gods,
I do Conjure you to inquire no more.

Oed. Furies and Hell ! *Hemon*, bring forth the Rack ;
Fetch hither Cords, and Knives, and Sulphurous flames :
He shall be bound, and gash'd, his skin flead off,
And burnt alive.

Phor. O spare my age.

Oed. Rise then, and speak.

Phor. Dread Sir, I will.

Oed. Who gave that Infant to thee ?

Phor. One of King *Lajus* Family.

Oed. O, you immortal Gods ! But say, who was't ?
Which of the Family of *Lajus* gave it ?
A Servant ; or one of the Royal-blood ?

Phor. O wretched State ! I dye, unless I speak ;
And, if I speak, most certain death attends me !

Oed. Thou shalt not dye. Speak then, who was it ? speak,
While I have sense to understand the horror ;
For I grow cold.

Phor. The Queen *Jocasta* told me
It was her Son by *Lajus*.

Oed. O you Gods !——But did she give it thee ?

Phor. My Lord, she did.

Oed. Wherefore? for what?—O break not yet, my heart;
Tho' my eyes burst, no matter: wilt thou tell me,
Or must I ask for ever? for what end?

Why gave she thee her Child?

Phor. To murder it.

Oed. O more than savage! murder her own bowels!
Without a Cause!

Phor. There was a dreadful one,
Which had foretold, that most unhappy Son
Should kill his Father, and enjoy his Mother.

Oed. But, one thing more,
Jocasta told me thou wert by the Chariot
When the old King was slain: Speak, I conjure thee,
For I shall never ask thee ought again,
What was the number of th' Assassins?

Phor. The dreadful deed was acted but by one;
And sure that one had much of your resemblance.

Oed. 'Tis well! I thank you, Gods! 'tis wondrous well!
Daggers, and Poyson; O there is no need
For my dispatch: and you, you merciless Pow'rs,
Hoord up your Thunder-stones; keep, keep your Bolts
For Crimes of little note.

Adr. Help, *Hamon*, help, and bow him gently forward;
Chafe, chafe his Temples: how the mighty Spirits,
Half strangled with the damp his sorrows rais'd,
Struggle for vent: but see, he breathes again,
And vigorous Nature breaks through all opposition.
How fares my Royal Friend?

[Falls.]

Oed. The worse for you.
O barbarous men, and oh the hated light,
Why did you force me back to curse the day;
To curse my friends; to blast with this dark breath
The yet untainted Earth and circling Air?
To raise new Plagues, and call new Vengeance down;
Why did you tempt the Gods, and dare to touch me?
Methinks there's not a hand that grasps this Hell
But should run up like Flax all blazing fire.
Stand from this spot, I wish you as my friends,
And come not near me, lest the gaping Earth

Swallow

Swallow you too——Lo, I am gone already.

[Draws, and claps his Sword to his breast, which Adrastus strikes away with his foot.]

Adr. You shall no more be trusted with your life:
Creon, Alcander, Hemon, help to hold him.

Oed. Cruel *Adrastus* ! wilt thou, *Hemon*, too ?
Are these the Obligations of my Friends ?

O worse than worst of my most barbarous Foes !

Dear, dear *Adrastus*, look with half an Eye
On my unheard-of Woes, and judge thy self,
If it be fit that such a Wretch should live !

O, by these melting Eyes, unus'd to weep,

With all the low submissions of a Slave,

I do conjure thee give my horrors way ;

Talk not of life, for that will make me rave :

As well thou may'st advise a tortur'd wretch,

All mangled o're from head to foot with wounds,

And his bones broke, to wait a better day.

Adr. My Lord, you ask me things impossible ;

And I with Justice should be thought your Foe,

To leave you in this Tempest of your Soul.

Tir. Tho' banish'd *Thebes*, in *Corinth* you may Reign ;

Th' Infernal Pow'rs themselves exact no more :

Calm then your rage, and once more seek the Gods.

Oed. I'll have no more to do with Gods, nor Men :

Hence, from my Arms, avant. Enjoy thy Mother !

What, violate, with Beastial appetite,

The sacred Veils that wrapt thee yet unborn,

This is not to be born ! Hence ; off, I say ;

For they who lett my Vengeance make themselves

Accomplices in my most horrid guilt.

Adr. Let it be so ; we'll fence Heav'ns fury from you,

And suffer all together : This perhaps,

When ruine comes, may help to break your fall.

Oed. O that, as oft I have at *Athens* seen

The Stage arise, and the big Clouds descend ;

So now in very deed I might behold

The pond'rous Earth, and all yon marble Roof

Meet, like the hands of *Jove*, and crush Mankind :

For all the Elements, and all the Pow'rs

Celestial, nay, Terrestrial and Infernal,
 Conspire the rack of out-cast *Oedipus*.
 Fall darkness then, and everlasting night
 Shadow the Globe; may the Sun never dawn,
 The Silver Moon be blotted from her Orb;
 And for an Universal rout of Nature
 Through all the inmost Chambers of the Sky,
 May there not be a glimpse, one Starry spark,
 But Gods meet Gods, and jostle in the dark.
 That jars may rise, and wrath Divine be hurl'd,
 Which may to Atoms shake the solid World.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V. SCENE I.

Creon, Alcander, Pyracmon.

Cre. **T**HE BEES is at length my own; and all my wishes,
 Which sure were great as Royalty e're form'd,
 Fortune and my auspicious Stars have Crown'd.
 O Diadem, thou Center of ambition,
 Where all it's different Lines are reconcil'd,
 As if thou wert the burning-glass of Glory!

Pyr. Might I be Counseller, I would intreat you
 To cool a little, Sir;
 Find out *Eurydice*;
 And, with the resolution of a man
 Mark'd out for Greatness, give the fatal Choice
 Of death or marriage.

Alc. Survey curs'd *Oedipus*;
 As one who, tho' unfortunate, 's belov'd,
 Thought innocent, and therefore much lamented
 By all the *Thebans*; you must mark him dead:
 Since nothing but his death, not banishment,
 Can give assurance to your doubtful Reign.

Cre. Well have you done, to snatch me from the storm
 Of racking Transport, where the little streams
 Of Love, Revenge, and all the under passions,
 As waters are by sucking VVhirl-pools drawn,

Were quite devour'd in the vast Gulph of Empire:
 Therefore, *Pyracmon*, as you boldly urg'd,
Eurydice shall dye, or be my Bride.
Alcander, Summon to their Master's aid
 My Menial Servants, and all those whom change
 Of State, and hope of the new Monarch's favour,
 Can win to take our part: Away. What now? [Ex. *Alcander*.

Enter Hæmon.

When *Hæmon* weeps, without the help of Ghosts,
 I may foretel there is a fatal Cause.

Hæm. Is't possible you should be ignorant
 Of what has happen'd to the desperate King?

Cre. I know no more, but that he was conducted
 Into his Closet, where I saw him fling
 His trembling Body on the Royal Bed;
 All left him there, at his desire, alone:
 But sure no ill, unless he dy'd with grief,
 Could happen, for you bore his Sword away.

Hæm. I did; and, having lock'd the door, I stood;
 And through a chink I found, not only heard,
 But saw him, when he thought no eye beheld him:
 At first, deep sighs heav'd from his woful heart,
 Murmurs, and groans, that shook the outward Rooms,
 And art thou still alive, Oh wretch! he cry'd?
 Then groan'd again, as if his sorrowful Soul
 Had crack'd the strings of Life, and burst away.

Cre. I weep, to hear; how then should I have griev'd:
 Had I beheld this wondrous heap of Sorrow!
 But, to the fatal period.

Hæm. Thrice he struck,
 With all his force, his hollow groaning breast,
 And thus, with out-cries, to himself complain'd.
 But thou canst weep then, and thou think'st 'tis well,
 These bubbles of the shallowest emptiest sorrow,
 Which Children vent for toys, and Women rain
 For any Trifle their fond hearts are set on;
 Yet these thou think'st are ample satisfaction
 For bloudiest Murder, and for burning Lust:

No, Parricide ; if thou must weep, weep blood ;
 Weep Eyes, instead of Tears : O, by the Gods,
 'Tis greatly thought, he cry'd, and fits my woes.
 Which said, he smil'd revengefully, and leapt
 Upon the floor ; thence gazing at the Skies,
 His Eye-balls fiery Red, and glowing vengeance ;
 Gods, I accuse you not, tho' I no more
 Will view your Heav'n, till with more durable glasses,
 The mighty Souls immortal Perspectives,
 I find your dazling Beings : Take, he cry'd,
 Take, Eyes, your last, your fatal farewell-view.
 When with a groan, that seem'd the call of Death,
 With horrid force lifting his impious hands,
 He snatch'd, he tore, from forth their bloody Orbs,
 The Balls of sight, and dash'd 'em on the ground.

Cre. A Master-piece of horror ; new and dreadful !

Hem. I ran to succour him ; but, oh ! too late ;
 For he had pluck'd the remnant strings away.
 What then remains, but that I find *Tiresias*,
 VVho, with his Wisdom, may allay those Furies
 That haunt his gloomy Soul ?

[*Ex.*]

Cre. Heav'n will reward
 Thy care ; most honest, faithful, foolish *Hemon* !
 But see, *Alcander* enters, well attended.

Enter Alcander, attended.

I see, thou hast been diligent.

Alc. Nothing these,
 For Number, to the Crowds that soon will follow ;
 Be resolute,
 And call your utmost Fury to revenge.

Cre. Ha ! thou hast given
 Th' Alarm to Cruelty ; and never may
 These eyes be clos'd, till they behold *Adrastus*
 Stretch'd at the feet of false *Eurydice*.
 But see, they're here ! retire a while, and mark.

Enter Adrastus, Eurydice, attended.

Adr. Alas, *Eurydice*, what fond rash man,

VVhat inconsiderate and ambitious Fool,
That shall hereafter read the Fate of *Oedipus*,
VVill dare, with his frail hand, to grasp a Scepter?

Eur. 'Tis true, a Crown seems dreadful, and I wish
That you and I, more lowly plac'd, might pass
Our softer hours in humble Cells away :
Not but I love you to that Infinite height,
I could (O wondrous proof of fiercest Love !)
Be greatly wretched in a Court with you.

Adr. Take then this most lov'd innocence away ;
Fly from Tumultuous *Thebes*,
From blood and Murder,
Fly from the Author of all Villanies,
Rapes, Death, and Treason, from that Fury *Creon* :
Vouchsafe that I, o're-joy'd, may bear you hence,
And at your Feet present the Crown of *Argos*.

[*Creon and Attendants come up to him.*]

Cre. I have o're-heard thy black design, *Adrastus*.
And therefore, as a Traytor to this State,
Death ought to be thy Lot : let it suffice
That *Thebes* surveys thee as a Prince ; abuse not
Her proffer'd mercy, but retire betimes,
Lest she repent and hasten on thy Doom.

Adr. Think not, most abject,
Most abhorr'd of Men.

Adrastus will vouchsafe to answer thee ;
Thebans, to you I justify my Love :
I have address'd my Prayers to this fair Princess ;
But, if I ever meant a violence,
Or thought to Ravish, as that Traytor did,
What humblest Adorations could not win ;
Brand me, you Gods, blot me with foul dishonour,
And let men Curse me by the name of *Creon* !

Eur. Hear me, O *Thebans*, if you dread the wrath
Of her whom Fate ordain'd to be your Queen,
Hear me, and dare not, as you prize your lives,
To take the part of that Rebellious Traytor.
By the Decree of Royal *Oedipus*,
By Queen *Jocasta's* order, by what's more,
My own dear Vows of everlasting Love,

I here resign to Prince *Adrastus* Arms
All that the VWorld can make me Mistress of.

Cre. O perjur'd VWoman !

Draw all ; and when I give the word, fall on.
Traytor, resign the Princess, or this moment
Expect, with all those most unfortunate wretches,
Upon this spot straight to be hewn in pieces.

Adr. No, Villain, no ;

VWith twice those odds of men,
I doubt not in this Cause
To vanquish thee.

Captain, remember to your care I give
My Love ; ten thousand thousand times more dear
Than Life, or Liberty.

Cre. Fall on, *Alcander.*

Pyracmon, you and I must wheel about
For nobler Game, the Princess.

Adr. Ah, Traytor, dost thou shun me ?

Follow, follow,
My brave Companions ; see, the Cowards fly.

[*Ex. fighting : Creon's Party beaten off by Adrastus.*]

Enter Oedipus.

Oed. O, 'tis too little this, thy loss of sight,
What has it done ? I shall be gaz'd at now
The more ; be pointed at, There goes the Monster !
Nor have I hid my horrors from my self ;
For tho' corporeal light be lost for ever,
The bright reflecting Soul, through glaring Opticks,
Presents in larger size her black Idea's,
Doubling the bloody prospect of my Crimes :
Holds Fancy down, and makes her act again,
VWith Wife and Mother, Tortures, Hell, and Furies.
Ha ! now the baleful off-spring's brought to light !
In horrid form they ranck themselves before me ;
VWhat shall I call this Medley of Creation ?
Here one, with all th' obedience of a Son,
Borrowing *Jocasta's* look, kneels at my Feet,
And calls me Father ; there a sturdy Boy,

Resembling *Lajus* just as when I kill'd him,
 Bears up, and with his cold hand grasping mine,
 Cries out, How fares my Brother *Oedipus*?
 VVhat, Sons and Brothers! Sisters and Daughters too!
 Fly all, begon, fly from my whirling brain;
 Hence, Incest, Murder; hence, you ghastly figures!
 O Gods! Gods, answer; is there any mean?
 Let me go mad, or dye.

Enter Jocasta.

Joc. Where, where is this most wretched of mankind,
 This stately Image of Imperial Sorrow,
 Whose story told, whose very name but mention'd,
 Would cool the rage of Feavers, and unlock
 The hand of Lust from the pale Virgin's hair,
 And throw the Ravisher before her feet?

Oed. By all my fears, I think *Jocasta's* Voice!
 Hence; fly; begon: O thou far worse than worst
 Of damning Charmers! O abhor'd, loath'd Creature!
 Fly, by the Gods, or by the Fiends, I charge thee,
 Far as the East, West, North, or South of Heav'n;
 But think not thou shalt ever enter there:
 The golden Gates are barr'd with Adamant,
 'Gainst thee, and me; and the Celestial Guards,
 Still as we rise, will dash our Spirits down.

Joc. O wretched Pair! O greatly wretched we!
 Two Worlds of woe!

Oed. Art thou not gon then? ha!
 How dar'st thou stand the Fury of the Gods?
 Or com'st thou in the Grave to reap new pleasures?

Joc. Talk on; till thou mak'st mad my rowling brain;
 Groan still more Death; and may those dismal sources
 Still bubble on, and pour forth blood and tears.
 Methinks, at such a meeting, Heav'n stands still;
 The Sea nor Ebbs, nor Flows: this Mole-hill Earth
 Is heav'd no more: the busie Eminets cease;
 Yet hear me on —

Oed. Speak then, and blast my Soul.

Joc. O, my lov'd Lord, tho' I resolve a Ruine

To match my Crimes ; by all my miseries,
'Tis horror, worse than thousand thousand deaths;
To send me hence without a kind Farewel.

Oed. Gods, how she shakes me ! Stay thee, *O Jocasta*,
Speak something e're thou goest for ever from me.

Joc. 'Tis Woman's weakness, that I would be pity'd ;
Pardon me then, O greatest; tho' most wretched,
Of all thy Kind : my Soul is on the brink
And sees the boiling Furnace just beneath :
Do not thou push me off, and I will go
With such a willingness, as if that Heav'n
With all it's glories glow'd for my reception.

Oed. O, in my heart, I feel the pangs of Nature ;
It works with kindness o're : Give, give me way ;
I feel a melting here, a tenderness,
Too mighty for the anger of the Gods !
Direct me to thy knees, yet oh forbear :
Lest the dead Embers should revive;
Stand off—and at just distance
Let me groan my horrors—here
On the Earth, here blow my utmost Gale ;
Here sob my Sorrows, till I burst with sighing :
Here gasp and Languish out thy wounded Soul.

Joc. In spite of all those Crimes the cruel Gods
Can charge me with, I know my Innocence ;
Know yours : 'tis Fate alone that makes us wretched,
For you are still my Husband.

Oed. Swear I am,
And I'll believe thee ; steal into thy Arms,
Renew endearments, think 'em no pollutions,
But chaste as Spirits joys : gently I'll come,
Thus weeping blind, like dewy Night, upon thee,
And fold thee softly in my Arms to slumber.

[*The Ghost of Lajus ascends by degrees, pointing at Jocasta.*]

Joc. Begon, my Lord ! Alas, what are we doing ?
Fly from my Arms ! Whirl-winds, Seas, Continents,
And Worlds, divide us ! O thrice happy thou,
Who hast no use of eyes ; for here's a sight
Would turn the melting face of Mercy's self
To a wild Fury.

Oed. Ha ! what see'st thou there ?

Joc. the Spirit of my Husband ! O the Gods !
How wan he looks !

Oed. Thou rav'st ; thy Husband's here.

Joc. There, there he Mounts,
In circling fire, amongst the blushing Clouds !
And see, he waves *Jocasta* from the VWorld !

Ghost. *Jocasta, Oedipus.*

[*vanish with Thunder.*

Oed. What would'st thou have ?

Thou know'st I cannot come to thee, detain'd
In darkness here, and kept from means of death,
I've heard a Spirit's force is wonderful ;
At whose approach, when starting from his Dungeon,
The Earth does shake, and the old Ocean groans,
Rocks are remov'd, and Tow'rs are Thundred down :
And walls of Brass, and Gates of Adamant,
Are passable as Air, and fleet like VVinds.

Joc. VVas that a Raven's Croak ; or my Sons Voice ?
No matter which ; I'll to the Grave, and hide me :
Earth open, or I'll tear thy bowels up.
Hark ! he goes on, and blabs the deed of Incest.

Oed. Strike then, Imperial Ghost ; dash all at once
This House of Clay into a thousand pieces :
That my poor lingring Soul may take her flight
To your Immortal Dwellings.

Joc. Haste thee then,
Or I shall be before thee : See, thou canst not see ;
Then I will tell thee that my wings are on :
I'll mount, I'll fly, and with a port Divine
Glide all along the gaudy Milky soil,
To find my *Lajus* out ; ask every God
In his bright Palace, if he knows my *Lajus*,
My murder'd *Lajus* !

Oed. Ha ! how's this, *Jocasta* ?
Nay, if thy brain be sick, then thou art happy.

Joc. Ha ! will you not ? shall I not find him out ?
Will you not show him ? are my tears despis'd ?
Why, then I'll Thunder, yes, I will be mad,
And fright you with my cries, : yes, cruel Gods,
Tho' Vultures, Eagles, Dragons tear my heart,
I'll snatch Celestial flames, fire all your dwellings,

Melt down your golden Roofs, and make your doors
 Of Chrystal flye from off their Diamond Hinges;
 Drive you all out from your Ambrosial Hives,
 To swarm like Bees about the field of Heav'n:
 This will I do, unless you shew me *Lajus*,
 My dear, my murder'd Lord. O *Lajus*! *Lajus*! *Lajus*!

[*Ex. Jocasta.*

Oed. Excellent grief! why, this is as it should be!
 No Mourning can be suitable to Crimes
 Like ours, but what Death makes, or Madness forms.
 I could have wish'd methought for sight again,
 To mark the Gallantry of her distraction:
 Her blazing Eyes darting the wandring Stars,
 T'have seen her mouth the Heav'ns, and mate the Gods,
 While with her Thundring Voice she menac'd high,
 And every Accent twang'd with smarming sorrow;
 But what's all this to thee? thou, Coward, yet
 Art living, canst not, wilt not find the Road
 To the great Palace of magnificent Death;
 Tho' thousand ways lead to histhousand doors,
 Which day and night are still unbarr'd for all.

[*Clashing of Swords: Drums and Trumpets without.*

Hark! 'tis the noise of clashing Swords! the sound
 Comes near: O, that a Battel would come o're me!
 If I but grasp a Sword, or wrest a Dagger,
 I'll make a ruine with the first that falls.

Enter Hæmon, with Guards.

Hæm. Seize him, and bear him to the Western-Tow'r.
 Pardon me, sacred Sir; I am inform'd
 That *Creon* has designs upon your life:
 Forgive me then, if, to preserve you from him,
 I order your Confinement.

Oed. Slaves, unhand me.
 I think thou hast a Sword: 'twas the wrong side.
 Yet, cruel *Hæmon*, think not I will live;
 He that could tear his eyes out, sure can find
 Some desperate way to stifle this curst breath:
 Or if I starve! but that's a lingring Fate;

Or if I leave my brains upon the wall !
 The Aiery Soul can easily o're-shoot
 Those bounds with which thou strive'st to pale her in :
 Yes ; I will perish in despite of thee ;
 And, by the rage that stirs me, if I meet thee
 In the other World, I'll curse thee for this usage.

[Exit.

Hem. *Tiresias*, after him ; and, with your Counsel,
 Advise him humbly ; Charm, if possible,
 These feuds within : while I without extinguish,
 Or perish in th' Attempt, the furious *Creon* ;
 That Brand which sets our City in a Flame.

Tir. Heav'n prosper your intent, and give a period
 To all your Plagues : what old *Tiresias* can
 Shall straight be done. Lead, *Manto* the Tow'r. [Ex. *Tir.* *Manto*.

Hem. Follow me all, and help to part this Fray, [Trumpets again.
 Or fall together in the bloody broil. [Ex.

*Enter Creon with Eurydice, Pyracmon and his party giving
 ground to Adrastus.*

Cre. Hold, hold your Arms, *Adrastus* Prince of *Argos*,
 Hear, and behold ; *Eurydice* is my Prisoner.

Adr. What would'st thou, Hell-hound ?

Cre. See this brandish'd Dagger :
 Forgo th' advantage which thy Arms have won,
 Or, by the blood which trembles through the heart
 Of her whom more than life I know thou lov'st,
 I'll bury to the hilt, in her fair breast,
 This Instrument of my Revenge.

Adr. Stay thee, damn'd wretch ; hold, stop thy bloody hand.

Cre. Give order then, that on this instant, now,
 This moment, all thy Souldiers straight disband.

Adr. Away, my Friends, since Fate has so allotted ;
 Begon, and leave me to the Villain's mercy.

Eur. Ah, my *Adrastus* ! call 'em, call 'em back !
 Stand there ; come back ! O, cruel barbarous Men !
 Could you then leave your Lord, your Prince, your King,
 After so bravely having fought his Cause,
 To perish by the hand of this base Villain ?
 Why rather rush you not at once together,

All to his ruine? drag him through the Streets,
Hang his contagious Quarters on the Gates;
Nor let my death affright you.

Cre. Dye first thy self then.

Adr. O, I charge thee hold.

Hence, from my presence all: he's not my Friend
That disobeyes: See, art thou now appeas'd? [*Ex. Attendants.*
Or is there ought else yet remains to do
That can atone thee? flake thy thirst of blood
With mine: but save, O save that innocent wretch.

Cre. Forego thy Sword, and yield thy self my Prisoner.

Eur. Yet while there's any dawn of hope to save
Thy precious life, my dear *Adrastus*,
What-e're thou dost, deliver not thy Sword;
With that thou may'st get off, tho' odds oppose thee:
For me, O, fear not; no, he dares not touch me;
His horrid love will spare me. Keep thy Sword;
Lest I be ravish'd after thou art slain.

Adr. Instruct me, Gods, what shall *Adrastus* do?

Cre. Do what thou wilt, when she is dead: My Souldiers
With numbers will o're-pow'r thee. I'th thy wish
Eurydice should fall before thee?

Adr. Traytor, no:
Better that thou and I, and all mankind
Should be no more.

Creon. Then cast thy Sword away,
And yield thee to my mercy, or I strike.

Adr. Hold thy rais'd Arm; give me a moment's pause.
My Father, when he blest me, gave me this;
My Son, said he, let this be thy last refuge;
If thou forego'st it, misery attends thee:
Yet Love now charms it from me; which in all
The hazards of my life I never lost.
'Tis thine, my faithful Sword, my only trust;
Tho' my heart tells me that the gift is Fatal.

Cre. Fatal! yes, foolish Love-sick Prince, it shall:
Thy arrogance, thy scorn,
My wounds remembrance,
Turn all at once the Fatal point upon thee.
Pyracmon, to the Palace, dispatch

The King : hang *Hæmon* up, for he is Loyal,
And will oppose me : Come, Sir, are you ready ?

Adr. Yes, Villain, for what-ever thou canst dare.

Eur. Hold, *Creon*, or through me, through me you wound.

Adr. Off, Madam, or we perish both ; behold
I'm not unarm'd, my ponyard's in my hand :
Therefore away.

Eur. I'll guard your life with mine.

Cre. Dye both then ; there is now no time for dallying.

[*Kills Eurydice.*

Eur. Ah, Prince, farewell ; farewell, my dear *Adrastus*. [*Dyes.*

Adr. Unheard of Monster ! eldest-born of Hell !

Down, to thy Primitive Flames.

[*Stabs Creon.*

Cre. Help, Souldiers, help :

Revenge me.

Adr. More ; yet more : a thousand wounds !

I'll stamp thee still, thus, to the gaping Furies.

[*Adrastus falls, kill'd by the Souldiers.*

Enter Hæmon, Guards, with Alcander and Pyracmon bound :
the Assassins are driven off.

O *Hæmon*, I am slain ; nor need I name
The inhumane Author of all Villanies ;
There he lyes gasping.

Cre. If I must plunge in Flames,
Burn first my Arm ; base instrument, unfit
To act the dictates of my daring mind :
Burn, burn for ever, O weak Substitute
Of that the God, Ambition.

[*Dyes.*

Adr. She's gone ; O deadly Marks-man, in the heart !
Yet in the pangs of death she grasps my hand :
Her lips too tremble, as if she would speak
Her last farewell. O, *Oedipus*, thy fall
Is great ; and nobly now thou goest attended !
They talk of Heroes, and Celestial Beauties,
And wondrous pleasures in the other World ;
Let me but find her there, I ask no more.

[*Dyes.*

Enter.

Enter a Captain to Hæmon: with Tiresias and Manto.

Cap. O, Sir, the Queen *Jocasta*, swift and wild,
As a robb'd Tygress bounding o're the Woods,
Has acted Murders that amaze mankind:
In twisted Gold I saw her Daughters hang
On the Bed Royal; and her little Sons
Stabb'd through the breasts upon the bloody Pillows.

Hæm. Relentless Heav'ns! is then the Fate of *Lajus*
Never to be Aton'd? How sacred ought
Kings lives be held, when but the death of one
Demands an Empire's blood for Expiation?
But see! the furious mad *Jocasta's* here.

*Scene Draws, and discovers Jocasta held by her women, and stabb'd
in many places of her bosom, her hair dishevel'd; her Children
slain upon the Bed.*

Was ever yet a sight of so much horror,
And pity, brought to view!

Joc. Ah, cruel Women!

Will you not let me take my last farewell
Of those dear Babes? O let me run and seal
My melting Soul upon their bubbling wounds!
I'll Print upon their Coral mouths such Kisses,
As shall recall their wandring Spirits home.
Let me go, let me go, or I will tear you piece-meal.
Help, *Hæmon*, help:
Help *Oedipus*; help, Gods; *Jocasta* Dyes.

Enter Oedipus above.

Oed. I've found a Window, and I thank the Gods
'Tis quite unbarr'd: sure, by the distant noise,
The height will fit my Fatal purpose well.

Joc. What ho, my *Oedipus*! see, where he stands!
His groping Ghost is lodg'd upon a Tow'r,
Nor can it find the Road: Mount, mount, my soul;
I'll wrap thy shivering Spirit in Lambent Flames! and so we'll sail.
But see! we're landed on the happy Coast;
And all the Golden Strands are cover'd o're
With glorious Gods, that come to try our Cause:
Jove, Jove, whose Majesty now sinks me down,
He who himself burns in unlawful fires,

Shall

Shall judge, and shall acquit us, O, 'tis done;
'Tis fixt by Fate, upon Record Divine:
And *Oedipus* shall now be ever mine.

[*Dyes.*]

Oed. Speak, *Hemon*; what has Fate been doing there?
What dreadful deed has mad *Jocasta* done?

Hem. The Queen her self, and all your wretched Offspring,
Are by her Fury slain.

Oed. By all my woes,
She has out-done me, in Revenge and Murder;
And I should envy her the sad applause:
But, Oh! my Children! Oh, what have they done?
'This was not like the mercy of the Heav'ns,
To set her madness on such Cruelty:
This stirs me more than all my sufferings,
And with my last breath I must call you Tyrants.

Hem. What mean you, Sir.

Oed. *Jocasta*! lo, I come.

O *Lajus*, *Labdacus*, and all you Spirits
Of the *Cadmean* Race, prepare to meet me,
All weeping rang'd along the gloomy Shore:
Extend your Arms t' embrace me; for I come;
May all the Gods too from their Battlements
Behold, and wonder at a Mortals daring;
And, when I knock the Goal of dreadful death,
Shout and applaud me with a clap of Thunder:
Once more, thus wing'd by horrid Fate, I come
Swift as a falling Meteor; lo, I flye,
And thus go downwards, to the darker Sky.

[*Thunder.* He flings himself from the window:
The Thebans gather about his Body.

Hem. O Prophet, *Oedipus* is now no more!
O curs'd Effect of the most deep despair!

Tir. Cease your Complaints, and bear his body hence;
The dreadful sight will dunt the drooping *Thebans*,
Whom Heav'n decrees to raise with Peace and Glory:
Yet, by these terrible Examples warn'd,
The sacred Fury thus Alarms the World.
Let none, tho' ne're so Vertuous, great and High,
Be judg'd entirely blest before they Dye.

EPILOGUE.

WHAT Sophocles could undertake alone,
Our Poets found a Work for more than one;
And therefore Two lay tugging at the piece,
With all their force, to draw the pondrous Mass from Greece.
A weight that bent ev'n Seneca's strong Muse,
And which Corneille's Shoulders did refuse.
So hard it is th' Athenian Harp to string!
So much two Consuls yield to one just King.
Ferour and pity this whole Poem sway;
The mightiest Machines that can mount a Play;
How heavy will those Vulgar Souls be found,
Whom two such Engines cannot move from ground?
When Greece and Rome have smil'd upon this Birth,
You can but Damn for one poor Spot of Earth;
And when your Children find your judgment such,
They'll scorn their Sires, and wish themselves born Dutch;
Each haughty Poet will infer with ease,
How much his Wit must under-write to please.
As some strong Churle would brandishing advance
The monumental Sword that conquer'd France;
So you, by judging this, your judgments teach
Thus far you like, that is, thus far you reach.

Since

Since then the Vote of full two Thousand years
Has Crown'd this Plot, and all the Dead are theirs.
Think it a Debt you pay, not Alms you give,
And in your own defence, let this Play live.
Think 'em not vain, when Sophocles is shown,
To praise his worth, they humbly doubt their own.
Yet as weak States each others pow'r assure,
Weak Poets by Conjunction are secure.
Their Treat is what your Pallats rellish most,
Charm! Song! and Show! a Murder and a Ghost!
We know not what you can desire or hope,
To please you more, but burning of a Pope.

FINIS.

